

Handout for CAT Aspirants:

Congratulations aspirant!!!! The first step in succeeding is to establish a goal and to diligently work towards it. As you have decided to walk upon the path to prepare for CAT, there are various do's and don'ts that one needs to understand and practice during the course of time and implement them as well so as to ensure you achieve your goal. CAT is considered to be the mother of all MBA entrance exams as numerous Business schools across India consider it as the first step towards selecting a candidate on the basis of one's performance in CAT. So, this handbook will help you in guiding and shaping your preparation so that you'll be able to give your best on the D day.

CAT Syllabus:

• Introduction

As it is rightly said that it is important to understand the monster before even thinking of taming it, so all those aspirants who have decided to write CAT the next year or are in the process of deciding to appear for the same, it is imperative to know the CAT syllabus before starting with its preparation. From the past four years, CAT has been divided into three sections- Verbal ability and Reading comprehension (VaRc), Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning (DILR) and Quantitative Aptitude (QA). With a total of 100 questions each constituting 3 marks and a penalty of 1 mark for every wrong answer, it is a three-hour examination testing the knowledge, aptitude, language skills and temperament of the students appearing for CAT. A familiarity with the CAT syllabus will eventually help a student to prepare well in advance and to structure his/her strategy in order to score an excellent percentile. Even though, there is no such fixed pattern on which one can expect questions to appear in this exam, still based on previous trends one can analyse the different topics and the structure of the problems that can be presumed to appear in the exam. So, here we shall go through the detailed outline of the entire CAT syllabus.

• Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension

This section checks the language skills of an aspirant and the command over the English language. The entire verbal CAT syllabus can be divided into the following sections

1. Reading Comprehension

Here passages from diverse fields like Economics, Politics, Social Issues, Science and Technology, Geography, Environment, Sports, Literature and Arts, History etc are given and based on the understanding of the passage discussed, one is required to solve questions. The questions might be direct, inference based, author's opinion, the tone of the author and application based. From the previous trends, there are three passages comprising of six questions each while two passages with three questions each. So, out of 34 problems, 24 questions come directly from Reading Comprehension. If one is able to interpret the passage accurately and with a good speed, then this section alone fetches an aspirant a phenomenal percentile in the verbal section.

2. Grammar

CAT tests the high school level grammar of aspirants and how well one is versed in the rules of the language. The following topics come under the grammar section:

- I. Figures of Speech
- II. Parts of Speech
- III. Determiners and articles.
- IV. Verbs- types of verbs, modals, gerunds, infinitives, participles, transitive and intransitive usage, tense, moods, voice etc.
- V. Modifiers
- VI. Parallelism

The questions in this section are called the sentence correction questions where one needs to spot the error in a statement based on sound knowledge of the grammar rules

3. Critical reasoning

The different models of questions that can be asked in CAT are based on assumptions, conclusions, strengthening and weakening of the argument, inference that can be derived from the statements given.

4. Para-jumbles

Here four to five statements are given in the problem and a candidate is expected to arrange these statements in a logical manner so that a paragraph is completed with utmost consistency. Usually, three to four questions come from this section in CAT.

5. Summary

In these type of problems, a paragraph is given and based upon that a student has to summarise the entire paragraph in one statement that accurately defines all the main points given in the paragraph. Around three questions can be expected in CAT from this section.

6. Odd one out

Here again four to five statements are given in which a candidate has to choose the one statement that doesn't align with the rest of the statements. In other words, one has to identify the statement that is out of context. One can find around two to three questions based on this concept.

7. Para-completion

Here a paragraph is given out of which one statement is missing. Based on the flow and context of the paragraph, one has to find the most suitable statement from the options given that accurately completes the paragraph.

8. Vocabulary:

One may not find direct questions from this section, but indirectly vocabulary holds the key to the understanding of the passages and questions. If one has a sound command over vocabulary, then the interpretation of passages becomes a cake walk. In other entrance exams one can find direct questions from this section like synonyms, antonyms, fill in the blanks etc.

• Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning

Before we jump on listing the conventional topics from which sets do appear, it is to be fairly understood by the students that there is no predefined syllabus for this section. Anything under the sky could be asked. DILR tests the logical and analytical abilities of a student that require no prerequisite knowledge but an innate ability to solve complex real-life problems that involve data, numbers and logic. Based on patterns that have appeared in the previous CAT papers, one can bifurcate the DILR section into various topics:

Data Interpretation

The sets on Data Interpretation (DI) involve numbers, facts and figures and require one's skill to calculate quickly and come to relevant conclusions based

on the information given in the set. The information can be represented in different formats :

- I. Tables
- II. Line Graphs
- III. Bar Graphs
- IV. Pie Charts
- V. XY Charts
- VI. Caselets
- VII. Reasoning based Data Interpretation

In sets involving DI, one needs to be comfortable with the calculations and have a fair knowledge of the mathematical tools like percentages, ratio and proportion and averages. Before attempting the questions, one must clearly understand what the set is talking about and then based on the questions one must start attempting the problems. Recently the emphasis has been on caselets i.e. sets based on paragraphs with no representation of data in the standard format like tables or bar graphs or pie charts.

Logical Reasoning :

Logical Reasoning (LR) involves how one can systematically connect the information given in the problem exercising his/her mental faculties and infer at the conclusions hidden in the problems. It involves how one can successfully connect the dots using the piece of information given in the set. From knowledge of the past papers, one can define the syllabus of LR as:

- I. Arrangements- Linear and Circular
- II. Distribution
- III. Binary Logic
- IV. Games and Tournaments
- V. Selections
- VI. Rankings
- VII. Blood Relations
- VIII. Network Diagrams
- IX. Venn Diagrams (Can be included in DI as well)
- X. Puzzles

From the previous trends, one can witness around eight sets with 4 questions each in this section With each year passing by, CAT is raising the level of difficulty of

the sets that appear in this section. So, one requires a lot of practice to be able to ace in this section.

• Quantitative Aptitude

Quantitative Aptitude involves the basic math that one has studied till X standard. We can divide the entire Quant syllabus into different topics and subtopics:

1. Geometry

- I. Lines and Angles- Parallel lines and Angle sum property in triangles
- II. Triangles- Triangle Inequality, Types of triangles, Medians, Altitudes, Angle Bisectors, Perpendicular bisectors and their point of intersection, Basic Proportionality Theorem, Midpoint theorem, Similarity.
- III. Polygons- Properties of different polygons like square, rectangle, trapezium, parallelogram, rhombus, octagon, hexagon, kite etc.
- IV. Circles- Properties of Circles
- V. Mensuration- Volume and surface area of solids- cube, cuboid, pyramid, prism, cylinder, cone and sphere.
- VI. Coordinate Geometry- Coordinate plane, lines and their slopes along with equations, pair of lines and equation of circles and their applications.

2. Arithmetic :

- I. Percentages
- II. Ratio and Proportion
- III. Averages
- IV. Time, Speed and Distance
- V. Time and Work + Pipes and Cisterns
- VI. Mixtures and Alligations
- VII. Simple Interest
- VIII. Compound Interest

3. Algebra :

- I. Theory of Equations- Roots of nth degree equation
- II. Linear Equations- Special equations, Linear equations in one, two or more variables with word problems.
- III. Quadratic Equations- Nature of roots and location of roots.
- IV. Logarithms- Properties of Log
- V. Inequalities- Various types of inequalities- rational, exponential, logarithmic inequalities.

- VI. Sequence and Series- Arithmetic Progression, Geometric Progressions, Harmonic Progressions and Special Series.
- VII. Functions – Types of Functions, Absolute Value Function, Graphs, Maxima and Minima, Functions as series etc.

4. Number System :

- I. Types of Numbers- natural numbers, whole numbers and integers
- II. Divisibility Rules
- III. Factors- Finding number of factors, sum of factors, product of all the factors of a number etc
- IV. HCF and LCM
- V. Remainders
- VI. Base System and Factorial

5. Modern Math :

- I. Permutations and Combinations
- II. Probability
- III. Set theory

Other than these topics, Trigonometry must also be studied thoroughly as one may find its application in other topics. Trigonometry includes Trigonometric ratios and Identities and Heights and Distance.

Based on the recent trends we can say that algebra and arithmetic constitute major two topics from which 70% of the problems appear. One can expect around 5-6 problems from Geometry, 2-3 problems from Number system and 2-3 problems from Modern Math.

As CAT is quite an unpredictable exam, so one must get comfortable with questions from each section and each topic. So, before embarking on the journey to CAT, go through the entire CAT syllabus.

Get, Set Go:

Before you plunge into preparation, it is imperative to know the level of difficulty of the exam and to evaluate where exactly you stand in terms of knowledge and temperament. Our sincere advice is to solve some previous CAT papers which

you can easily find on the internet. This will give you a clearer picture of what to study and in how much detail.

Get your resources ready:

In the entire course of preparation, one would be required to solve plethora of questions and gain conceptual clarity on a lot of topics. The only way to ace this exam is through sheer hard work and practice. So, gather the study resources that you will need to go through. If you feel you are weak in math, then download the IX and X standard NCERTs and start going through them. If possible, get your hands on RD Sharma of IX and X standard. The best thing about these books are that they give you a lot of problems with slight variations on a single concept. This gives one the confidence and enough practice. But, this is just the first step.

You will need the study material with advanced level questions. But, the problem lies in where to get such enriched content. It is where a good coaching institute comes into play. A good institute will give ample of CAT level questions on each topic. Exposure to diverse questions where multitude of concepts are involved is a must for any aspiring candidate. So, join an institute where each and every concept is taken up backed by numerous questions based upon it.

Why do you need a good coaching institute for your CAT preparation?

Is it really necessary to join a coaching institute when so much of content is available on the internet? How could a coaching help one get a desired percentile?

The answer to the above confusion lies in the fact that preparation for CAT or any other exam is a journey with its own sets of crests and troughs. There are days which feel quite promising while on many occasions there are spells of gloom and dejection. One needs to be consistent enough with the studies and continuously work upon self-improvement. It is a long journey that requires guidance in each and every step you take. The most imperative role of a coaching is to keep your preparation disciplined, focused and yet enjoyable. A coach helps one to come out of the existing mental boundaries and assists in tapping one's unused potential and caliber. A mentor is not just a guide in your preparation but also a strategist who helps you in devising the most appropriate tactics and strategies required to succeed. At times he or she may scold you, at times motivate you, at times train you and at times may even ignore you so that you don't lose the focus and deliver the maximum you can. So, we all need mentors who help

us embark on the journey that requires sweat and blood and it is they who would not take a sigh of relief until you realise your dreams.

So, when it comes to why one needs to join a classroom program, the following points will help you understand it more concisely:

1. **Conceptual Clarity:-** The lectures and discussion classes taking place gives one the physical and real time interaction with the best of trainers who are masters in their subjects. They might help you in better understanding of the concepts along with their applications. The beauty of a good teacher lies in the optimal selection of words that simplify even the complex of theories.
2. **Discipline:-** When you join a coaching, then it gives structure to your preparation. The entire syllabus will commence in a systematic manner so that your preparation is not haphazard but is streamlined.
3. **Peer Interaction and Competition:-** One learns the maximum from his or her peers. When you join a classroom program you will find a real competitive atmosphere which will ensure that you stay motivated towards your goal. You'll find people from diverse academic backgrounds studying together for the same goal and in the very process helping and motivating each other. There will always be someone in the class who would come out with really good doubts or someone who would have tried a more smarter and shorter approach to solve a problem. These small learnings in the classes go a long way.
4. **Doubt Clarification:-** The most important aspect while preparation is the doubts clarification. When one only relies on self- study or some online coaching, the doubts don't get resolved and eventually start getting accumulated which results in low conceptual clarity and eventually a lost in interest in the given subject. With a good coaching institute there can be timely doubt clarification sessions which is a very healthy sign as getting doubts indicate that one is studying and getting them clarified means getting a better understanding of the topic. Only join an institute which support students in quick and extensive doubt clarification.
5. **Enriched Study Material:-** Instead of searching hither and tither online for study resources, a good institute provides you with ample of good quality study resources. These study resources are meticulously prepared by trainers and subject matter experts which definitely give one a holistic understanding of any topic and an exposure to all the kind of models that can appear in the exam.

6. **Revision Sessions/ Workshops:-** Once the syllabus gets over, the most important phase of one's preparation starts i.e. revision. One cannot take this phase lightly because during this time the concepts that one has covered during the lectures is applied extensively and it helps one to remember them as well. So, some coaching institutes organise workshops that gives a boost to your preparation. These are aimed at pulling up your percentile and helping you in build a temperament required to perform at your optimum during the exam.

7. **Group Discussion and Personal Interview Preparation:** - After are results of the written exam are out and hopefully you have fared brilliantly, then the calls for GDPI for the colleges start pouring in. Some don't take this phase quite seriously and that's where they fail miserably. The elite B schools want to admit the best of the students into their MBA program and so they look forward to candidates who have not just fared exceptionally in CAT but also promise to be exceptional in overall personality. They seek candidates who have been quite a performer not just in the academic domain but also have shown their prowess in extra- curricular activities as well. Be it team management, leadership skills, quick and rational decision making, sound business acumen, the interview panel looks to have the best of the cream and turn them into successful managers and entrepreneurs. So, as your entire profile is being evaluated, one needs to impress the panel and trust me it's not a cake walk. This is where one needs the help of an MBA coaching. The coaches help you in structuring your answers, working on your body language, making you aware with the professional behavior and disposition, helping you with content, voice modulation, hand gestures and working on each specific details of your profile.

So, in a nut shell if you want your preparation to be structured, disciplined, highly spirited and well guided, then we strongly recommend you to join a good coaching institute where each student his highly valued and is trained well enough so as to bring out the best version of him.

Mocks and Their Significance:

In our opinion, it is the level of preparedness and familiarity with the dynamics of CAT and yet the flexibility and the ability to align along with the changing nature of this exam that plays the imperative part in the success of students. CAT is known for its uncertainties and the exhaustive nature of this exam can break even the resolute minds. This onscreen exam with the clock ticking away gives a panic attack to many, thereby forcing them to do sloppy mistakes and resulting in poor performance. So, how to adapt oneself to such nerve breaking test

environment and give an optimum performance superseding your peer's. It is where the Mock CAT Test Series help one in unleashing his/her true potential and helping in delivering a stunning performance at the actual exam you have been all waiting for.

1. Getting familiar with the test pattern and environment:

Mock CAT Test series are a great way of getting used to the test environment. Marking questions for review, using an online calculator, jumping from question to question in a quick span of time, leaving questions that appear unfamiliar and allocating time for each question requires practice and dedication and this is where the mocks come in handy. A good 50 + mocks before the CAT will help one to get suitably adapted to this exam and help in acing it.

2. Building strategies and tactics:

CAT is not just about knowledge and aptitude. It is also about how well you optimize your resources- knowledge, time and energy. There is no tailor-made strategy that works wonders for all. Everyone needs a different strategy and the best one comes out by experimenting. So, mocks should not be looked upon as merely a replica of CAT but also as a testing ground to evaluate strategies and tactics best suited according to one's potential and limitations.

3. Building stamina and temperament:

For the past three years, CAT has been a three- hour online exam that puts loads of stress on the eyes and mind of a test taker. It requires stamina on the part of a student to be able to continuously use his grey matter and solve problems in the entire duration of the exam. Appearing for more than 50 mocks help in building that required stamina. Also, knowledge is one thing and translating it into results is a different ball game. This is where temperament comes into play. How well a candidate is able to maintain his composure in the face of adversity is what differentiates between losers and winners. It is a skill that can be developed through sheer practice and discipline. Mock CAT Test series are so designed and

created to give one enough surprises and setbacks thereby resulting in the development of temperament.

4. Getting exposure to good quality and tricky questions:

Every Mock CAT Test Series boasts of good quality questions that are tricky and conceptual (whether they are in line with CAT or not is a different story). Learning involves giving one an exposure to a plethora of tricky problems that enhance conceptual clarity. Appearing for a good number of mocks can help one to amass some quality problems and sets and can refer to them from time to time.

5. Identifying the weak and strong areas:

Mock CAT Test Series help one to identify the weak and strong topics. For instance, if one is not able to solve problems on Time, Speed and Distance in a few mocks, then one can establish that he/she is not comfortable with that topic and needs to work upon that so as to improve. Similarly, identification of strong areas makes it easy to pick questions from that topic and solve them in a particular mock so as to maximize one's score. Thus, knowing one's strengths and weaknesses help in better planning and sound execution of strategies.

6. Getting habitual with onscreen problem solving:

As CAT and majority of other MBA entrance exams are computer-based, one needs to be adept in the onscreen reading of the problems and solving them. As Reading Comprehension contains long and vocabulary rich passages, it becomes quintessential for one to be able to quickly and clearly read the passages and draw inferences from them. This is where mocks train you to read and solve RC questions easily and correctly. Similarly, Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning contains big sets laden with numbers and figures. Sometimes you have to scroll up and down and even sideways to read the entire set. This causes weariness and slows down the thought process. To combat this, mocks repeatedly train you by exposing you to diverse and difficult sets that require skilful mind and eye coordination.

7. Act as a constant reminder:

Mock CAT Test Series will keep on reminding a student that he needs to raise the bar. As the mocks are held on a regular basis and can even be scheduled by a

student (although that requires sound planning), they keep on pushing the students to revise the concepts and work upon their weak areas.

8. Barometer to gauge one's level of preparedness:

Every serious aspirant purchases some or the other CAT Test Series. These mocks give an idea of his/her performance compared to his peers in terms of his percentile, rank and score. Also, the time taken by a student in a particular problem compared to the average time taken by the test takers gives an understanding of one's problem-solving speed. Mocks are not just to evaluate one's performance compared to others. They are also meant to help one analyse his/her growth trajectory starting from the first mock to the last and work scientifically towards improving it due the course of his preparation.

How to analyse Mocks?

How many mocks should one appear for before he or she appears for CAT?

Now, the answer to this question is tricky. For some prodigy, 10-15 mocks will suffice while for some even 60-70 full-length tests will work no wonders. In my opinion, a 50 plus mocks are a minimum if you want to be well versed with the dynamics of the exam and want to implement the perfect strategy that you have devised during your experimentation with the mocks. A single test series will not be able to provide you with more than 50 mocks and that makes it mandatory to join at least two mock CAT Test Series. This also ensures that you get an exposure to a diverse category of good questions likely to be asked in CAT.

Now, point by point we shall talk about the steps one must follow to have a proper analysis of a mock enabling one to come out with better ways to approach the subsequent mocks:

1. Decide whether you lack in content or temperament: When I say content, then it entails your fundamentals and the knowledge while temperament implies the ability to translate your knowledge into an optimum performance without the pressure getting into your nerves. So, once you have appeared for a mock, then the next day start solving the entire test without looking at the timer as if you are

solving an assignment and check whether you are able to solve problems which you couldn't during the mock or the questions that you found difficult and left unanswered during the test. Now, if you are able to solve a majority of the problems, then that implies you are good at content but lack of temperament either due to the clock ticking away causes you to make sloppy mistakes or hampers your decision-making skills or lack of stamina causes you not to put your best of efforts while solving problems. But, if you aren't able to solve problems even during the analysis, then lack of content is the primary reason for a poor performance. You need to get your basics right and work on improving the fundamentals.

2. Make an excel file of your performance after each mock: Once you have solved the entire paper, make a report of your performance on excel. Make tabs of sections, topics, subtopics, Level of difficulty, correct answers, incorrect answers and unattempted problems. Put each and every question under these tabs to make a detailed record of your performance in a particular mock. During the course of time, if you analyze this excel file against some mocks, you'll realize which topics have been a pain in the ass and you have been consistently avoiding problems based on those concepts. For example, if you analyze the last 5 mocks and discovered that you have been constantly leaving questions on Mixtures and Allegations, then it implies that you need to work on that topic. Pick up the assignments on that topic and start solving problems until you get the hang of it. Similarly, if you realize that you have been constantly solving a question on logarithms in last few mocks by looking at the excel file, then it means you are good in that topic and definitely you need to pick problems on logarithms in the subsequent mocks and solve them correctly. It will improve your decision making and will allow you to choose problems wisely. *Remember you need to dissect the problem on subtopic level. For example- Geometry- Triangles- Similarity. This will allow you to work on the specifics instead of working randomly upon an entire module like Geometry.*

3. Save or Bookmark good problems: Once you have solved the entire paper, we must have found some tricky questions that were not lengthy but good enough to be asked in CAT. Also, questions that involved multiple concepts like a geometry problem involving properties of circles and similarity together clubbed into one question are the one that helps you to remember the application of different theorems and are likely to be asked in CAT. Now, either copy paste those questions along with solutions in a Word document under different modules or if your test series allows you to bookmark them topic-wise, do that. The idea

is to create a repository of quality questions. Let's say that on an average you find 15 good quality tricky questions in each mock in the Quant Section and you appear for like 50 mocks before CAT, then that implies that you have saved close to 750 tricky questions along with their solutions and what better resource to revise one week before CAT when one has no clue as to what to study and what not to. Simply revising formulae at the last week is not sufficient. You need to be well versed with their applications as well.

4. Consult your mentor after the analysis: Just keeping a record of your performance is not sufficient. Even every CAT Test Series does that for you. But drawing conclusions and patterns from the data and figuring out solutions to overcome the roadblocks to your optimum performance is what is required. Data itself is dumb. Intelligent information drawn from it speaks great volumes. But it's not as easy as it is said. You need to consult an expert (your trainer) who understands you well enough and must be a veteran to be able to draw inferences from your past performances and suggest effective ways on your improvement.

5. Solve the sectional tests: The power of sectional tests is unimaginable. If after analyzing last the three to four mocks, you identified that a particular section has been a constant mess, screwing up your entire performance, then, you need to solve sectional tests of that subject. It builds the confidence and helps in improving scores in that particular subject. Moreover, LRDI can best be practised by solving sectional tests of one hour each as it will help you with the better selection of sets and solving them onscreen under the constraints of time. Also, Reading Comprehension involves reading long passages and solving tricky problems involving inferences, the tone of the passage and summary based questions. This requires consistent and disciplined training in a time-based manner. Sectional tests on Verbal Ability will enhance your understanding of passages and complement your learning. Purchase a mock CAT Test Series with a package that includes sectional tests as well other than the full-length tests.

6. Schedule your mocks wisely: Randomly appearing for mocks without a strict schedule and lack of interval between the mocks will result in fluctuations in your performances and the data derived will be devoid of any pattern and will make no sense. There must be some interval between the mocks so as to get ample time for their analysis and do revision in between the mocks. Working on weak areas

between the mocks will help in improving upon them and will lead to a healthy growth trajectory.

Doing analysis is basically a post-mortem and the results of it will depend on how sound is the skills of the analyser and how keen he or she is on improving. It is no rocket science. Most of us usually feel dejected at our failures and curse ourselves for the lack of skills without introspecting on the root cause of the failures. Scoring low on the mocks must be an eye-opener instead of a reason to give up on our dreams. Think rationally and work towards perfection. After all, mocks are simply the testing grounds to gauge our strategies and the level of our preparedness. Don't shy away from mocks and don't be lethargic enough not to analyze them. Follow the steps suggested above and surely you'll evolve as a perfect candidate for a seat in your dream college.

How to keep yourself motivated while preparing for the CAT exam?

An oft-repeated refrain we hear runs thus, 'practice makes one perfect,' and as an aspirant seeking entry to a B-school, you, gentle reader, along with most of your peers, hold on steadfastly to that dictum, hoping, against all hope even, that someday this deprivation you subject yourselves to, this daily grind of solving question papers, at the cost of depriving yourselves of your fleetingly glorious youth, will help your passage from mediocrity to excellence; to a future both bright and cushy.

However, reality has a way of poking one in the eye and lay bare on the already rocky path you have chosen for yourselves those unforeseen challenges you are psychologically unprepared for. One such hurdle that has bumped many an aspirant into oblivion is a creeping lack of motivation that sets in even as we strive to practice harder and every day in order to improve our scores. The best we can hope for, once we surrender to this terrible lack of motivation, is another chance the next year. The worst end dreams and shattered hopes. And because we, as educators with over twenty years to collective teaching experience, understand that, here's an 8-step, proven and time-tested orientation plan that could help you stay motivated and stay focused until you nail the CAT.

1. REMEMBER YOUR GOAL:

No, we do NOT refer to the obvious one, to score the maximum you can on the CAT or even your Ultimate Goal, which is to start off a great career. We refer here to the goals you set for yourselves when you are committed to taking on the examination. Divide each part of your preparation first into months. Set targets for yourself or, if you want a more realistic perspective, ask your friends and teachers for help in determining what those targets will be. Once you have those goals established, organize further. Ask yourselves how much effort it will take you each day to complete the monthly targets that you have set. Map it out on an excel file or choose to write it out on paper(In our opinion that's not very environment-friendly)and keep this schedule handy.

Place it on your bedside table, stick it on the wall above your bed, turn it into your desktop wallpaper, set reminders on your phones, set a 'CAT threat' as your voice note; whatever works for you! But make no mistake; if you do NOT internalize your schedules; if you do NOT stick to it; if you waver, whatever be the reasons, you WILL lose your way. Your targets should be sacrosanct, inviolable because only then can you work on those every single day. You'll need that because the CAT isn't an easy catch. It is said, and wisely so, that 'the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' What is NOT always apparent is the unspoken truth; the first step, while perhaps the most significant, **must be followed thereafter by step after step before one completes the journey; and that is why one must —**

2. TALK TO YOUR TEACHERS: MORE IMPORTANTLY, GET YOURSELF, TEACHERS:

This is especially for the first-timers. If there is anybody who is going to relate to your misery and reduce it better than any of your peers, it's a teacher. Someone who has already seen the intensity of the exam and most likely has multiple tricks up his/her sleeve to make your targets seem simpler to achieve. Even if you don't know, they will and most teachers will go out of their way to help you. You have to merely ask. They will help you because your success is monetarily and morally theirs.

3. STICK TO THE GAME-PLAN:

We are all lords at creating meticulous and fool-proof game-plans, and wouldn't life be so much simpler if we could, just for once, stick to our game plans, for once, remember that it takes a year to find another CAT. Time is precious, both during the exam itself and during your preparation. Every moment you spend not

following your established schedule, remember, someone else, somewhere else is working on his/her plan, sticking to his/her own schedule and when the time comes that person is likely to be better organized than you and better prepared than you. That person will score better and quite possibly have a shot at a future better than yours. You have put your future at stake here. I believe that's something worth fighting for **and, hence, you must** ———.

4. DEVELOP A WARRIOR MINDSET:

Let's first define what a warrior is. In general, a conventional definition for a warrior is "someone who is engaged in or experienced in battle." But this definition goes only so far, as it relates to those fighting in a war. A more encompassing definition of a warrior in our opinion and one that is promoted by <http://www.policemag.com>, a well known magazine for police officers, people who take on some of life's harshest challenges on a regular basis, would be "**one who is engaged aggressively or energetically in an activity, cause, or conflict.**" We believe this is a better working definition since it broadens the scope of the term and therefore who can be involved with it. Make no mistake, the endeavour you have chosen to undertake is all of the above, an activity, a cause and most certainly a conflict. Let's elaborate on the subject further; one must perform all goals set for himself/herself, each day, every day until it's time to finally take the test. That's activity. Given our population, our relatively uninspired education system and the resulting overproduction of undergraduates in all disciplines, it is essential to keep sight of what one stands to lose. It's not just the possession of material luxuries that are bound to our MBAs, there's also a validation of self at stake here, That's a cause! In a country where largely your degrees still define you, it'd be a mistake to not make a mark, to give up without trying. Those who struggle to get to boss around those who give up. That's conflict and that's the truth! A mindset is developed when you employ a **fixed mental attitude that predetermines your response to a given situation.** For example, your attitudes toward something help develop your response or approach. Your mindset becomes your approach. If you determine you won't give in and follow through with your prep-plan for each day, that's who you become. **However,** ———.

5. DON'T RELY ONLY ON THE INTERNET

While the relatively recent glut of free data being dispensed rather freely by every other telecom company has freed us in many ways and while it does seem that everything about the CAT is on the internet, all dimensions, A to Z; don't depend too much on the internet. If this is your first rodeo, contact a good preparatory

institution, enrol in their classroom programs and get trained. Learn the basics and hold on to them fast. If you are a veteran and taking the CAT for the second or the third time, to revise the basics. Mock tests, sample questions, real-time test papers, video lessons, all are helpful but only as long as they are representative of the actual format you are training for.

A case in point; let's say, you want to prepare for the CAT and buy a test series that does NOT accurately reflect the current pattern of the examination, ask yourselves, can it really prepare you for that particular examination? In our opinion, while such source material does serve some purpose, they are ultimately unreflective of the existing realities. So, identify the pattern for each examination that you plan to write. Do your research, talk to instructors, friends, siblings; they each have their favourites. Ask them why they believe that their recommendations are the best. Does the material suggest conform to the exam pattern you wish to undertake? Does it specifically address the challenges which are specific to you? If the answer is nothing more than 'because everyone else says it's good,' give it a pass. If the answers make sense to you, you've found the right people. Listen to those people and collect the best material that's out there. **But don't forget to ———**

6. MAKE TIME FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU LOVE DOING:

A lot of us fail to understand the importance of recreation; it is a stabilizer, a rejuvenator; it helps us decompress but more importantly it serves to give us hope and even more importantly, it reminds us why this particular journey is important not just for ourselves but for those too who depend on us to succeed, who count on us to provide ourselves with a future far brighter than what we would perhaps imagine for ourselves were it not for their presence or happiness.

Spend quality time with the people who matter to you. Ask for their help to help you better organize. For instance, if a colleague or a family member whom you trust and work well with is aware that you're undertaking preparations for an

examination, he or she is more likely to help you. You can maybe change your shifts or delegate chores which affect your schedule. In nine cases out of ten, if you ask for help, they will. If you are more inwardly oriented, catch a bus to a place you've always wanted to visit and practice your vocabulary while you're on the bus, read articles that appear on reputable sites such as <https://aeon.co/> to get a better grasp of organizational and linguistic complexities that are employed in writing. Familiarize yourself with news, updates and discussions on different topics. That might help build the confidence you need to confront any RC passage. Or switch tabs and find solace in Netflix when you can see nothing but Quant on the screen, but retain the ability to always accomplish the targets that you have set yourselves!

7. STAY HEALTHY:

It's needless to say that healthy people do everything better than those who are emotionally or physically troubled. Follow the axiom: A healthy body harbors a healthy mind. That's not to say that you abstain from all the little joys that youth offers, but do everything in moderation. Do party when you must, do eat out once in a while, do meet friends but ensure your study timetable comes first. If possible, eat healthy, exercise and meditate a little every day. If not possible, make an effort; make it possible. Sweat today so you may shine tomorrow. Remember always, giving up is easy. Millions do it every day. Don't be one of them. Persevere!

8. YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY ONE:

This article doesn't mean to question your uniqueness by any means, this is only to remind you, you're neither the first person nor the only person to appear for the exam, and that in itself should be enough to motivate you, because from experience, we can say that the opportunities we take are not the ones we regret, but we surely regret those we pass by. So, awaken, light your hopes and march forward with a resolute step!

Happy learning and good luck for your preparation!!!

Best Wishes:
Team Kitabee