

How to plan an LNAT essay

Choose a defensible prompt, build the argument spine, then spend the clock on prose.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Section B gives you 40 minutes to choose one of three prompts and write one essay. The official ideal is 500–600 words. A short plan should settle the definition, thesis, reasons, strongest objection and final condition before drafting begins.

Checked against the sources named in this guide, August 2026. British English. Free to share.

1 Choose the prompt you can defend

The official task is one essay selected from three prompts. The test centre does not add the essay to your Section A mark. Universities receive it and apply their own approach, so a plan should make your judgement visible without pretending that the board supplies one universal numeric essay score.

Time	Job	Leave the phase with
0–4 min	Read all three prompts and reject two for a named reason	One prompt in your own words
4–8 min	Define the disputed term and state a provisional judgement	A bounded thesis
8–12 min	Write two distinct reasons, the strongest objection and your reply	A five-line argument spine
12–34 min	Draft paragraphs that move that spine forward	A complete answer
34–40 min	Check prompt fit, missing links and repetition	A qualified conclusion

This split is a UniGenius study method, not an official timing rule. Choose the prompt that gives you a clear dispute, two different reasons and a serious objection. Topic familiarity helps only when it produces a line of reasoning.

1 The tell

Choose the prompt you can defend, not the prompt on which you can list the most facts. A plan with a clear dispute is more useful than a topic full of loose associations.

2 Write the five lines before the prose

1. **Definition.** What does the key term mean in this essay?
2. **Thesis.** What is your answer, and how far does it reach?
3. **Reason.** What mechanism connects the first point to that answer?
4. **Objection and reply.** What is the strongest case against you, and what survives it?
5. **Judgement.** What condition or limit belongs in the final sentence?

A reason is not a topic label. “Freedom” is a topic. “A rule that lets people refuse a public service can protect freedom when the service is not needed to prevent direct harm” is a claim that can be tested. Use a hypothetical example when it makes the mechanism clearer. Do not dress an invented statistic as evidence.

2 Try it

Plan three prompts without writing the essays. Keep only plans with a thesis, two reasons and a real reply. Prompt selection becomes calmer when discarding a thin argument is a trained move.

3 Pressure-test the plan before you write

Failure	Question to ask	Repair
Prompt drift	Does the thesis answer the exact wording?	Copy the key verb into the plan
Two versions of one reason	Would deleting one reason remove the same support?	Replace repetition with a different mechanism
Example as proof	Does the example show the claim or merely sit beside it?	State the link in one sentence
Weak objection	Would a thoughtful opponent really choose this?	Attack your strongest premise
Empty balance	What does the reply change?	State the final condition or decide the dispute

Worked example A plan that changes after the objection

Prompt. Public authorities should require everyone to vote. Discuss.

Five-line plan.

1. Define “require” as a legal duty with a penalty, not encouragement.
2. Reject a penalty for choosing not to vote, while allowing a response that records abstention.
3. Participation may make government answer to more people, but a forced uninformed mark is not the same as considered support.
4. The strongest objection is that a small civic duty protects a shared institution. Reply: that duty does not justify removing a lawful refusal when a non-punitive route records it.
5. Accept a duty to make participation easy, not a punishment for declining it.

Correct: The objection changes the final position from a broad rejection of pressure to a narrower distinction between access, response and punishment.

Misreading: A plan that lists one benefit and one harm, then says both have a point, has not decided which principle controls the answer.

The objection should do work. If the reply leaves the thesis unchanged word for word, the objection may be too weak or the original claim may be too broad. Narrow the judgement before drafting instead of contradicting yourself in the final paragraph.

4 Sources

LNAT Consortium, Test format

One essay from three prompts in a separate 40-minute section. [Check the official format.](#)

LNAT Consortium, Hints and tips

The official advice on position, economy, assumptions and the 500–600 word ideal. [Read the advice.](#)

LNAT Consortium, Sample essays

Official examples for studying selection, organisation and expression. [Open the samples.](#)

Study method only. The test centre does not centrally score Section B. The worked prompt is original.