

LNAT Section A skills explained

A working map of the five item skills, the stem patterns and the mistakes that cost close questions.

THE SHORT ANSWER

The official pages describe abilities rather than a granular syllabus. In the two official practice papers analysed in the evidence register, A1 and A4 account for 57 of 84 questions. Prepare for the decision the question asks, not for the subject named in the passage.

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

1 The five item-level skills

The evidence register assigns one primary skill to every one of the 84 Section A questions in the two official practice papers. The label follows the decision you must make, not the subject the passage happens to discuss.

Skill	What you do	Corpus
A1 structure	Track the function of reasons, examples, objections, contrasts and conclusions.	31, 36.9%
A2 inference	Work out what follows without importing outside knowledge.	13, 15.5%
A3 author	Read purpose, attitude, tone and degree of commitment from the passage.	12, 14.3%
A4 detail	Preserve exact statements, qualifications, local meaning and scope.	26, 31.0%
A5 transfer	Apply a governing relation or principle to a new case.	2, 2.4%

A1 and A4 together account for 57 of 84 items, or 67.9%. A preparation plan built only around broad main-idea questions leaves much of the measured work untrained.

1 The tell

Name the operation before you judge the option. Ask: role, consequence, stance, exact wording or principle? The topic is rarely the operation.

2 A6 belongs to the whole section

The platform mapping also names A6: manage 42 questions across 12 passages in 95 minutes. It is a format-level skill, not an isolated multiple-choice question type. The evidence supports timed passage sets, not a new question asking whether a candidate is good at time management.

The average allowance is about 135.7 seconds per question. It is only an average because passages contain three or four questions and the density of the reading changes. Use the passage as the training unit.

3 Recognise the stem before you reread

Stem pattern	Question job	Count
Argument function	Why is this phrase, example or contrast there?	16
Literal detail	Which fact, qualification or formal cell is exact?	15
Main claim or purpose	What central conclusion or aim controls the passage?	14
Inference	What is supported without being stated in those words?	13
Meaning in context	What does this word or phrase mean here?	7
Tone or stance	How does the author feel or commit?	7
Cross-source comparison	Which voice agrees, differs or is being attributed?	7
Fact, opinion or support	Which statement has the requested status?	3
Analogy or application	Which new case preserves the same relation?	2

These are primary labels. One question can involve more than one mental move. The useful label is the move that separates the correct option from its nearest rival.

1. Underline the verb in the stem: explain, imply, support, compare, identify or apply.
2. Write the smallest answer the stem could accept. Do not answer a wider question because the passage is interesting.
3. Return to the sentence, paragraph or speaker that controls the choice.
4. Check whether a degree word such as *some, usually, may* or *only* changes the option.

4 Turn the map into a repair loop

Miss	Record	Next drill
A1 structure	Role swap	Label each paragraph as support, pressure, reply or conclusion
A2 inference	Outside fact	Write the supporting chain using passage words only
A3 author	Voice or degree	Circle who owns the claim and how strongly it is stated
A4 detail	Qualification loss	Copy the exact scope word before comparing options
A5 transfer	Topic match	State the relation, then test it in the new case

Worked example Function is not the same as topic

Passage. A council wants to replace printed bus notices with an app. The author accepts that an app can be updated quickly, then notes that a passenger without a smartphone may lose access. The council should test whether missed journeys fall before removing the printed notice.

Question. What role does the passenger point play?

- A. It proves that apps cannot be updated quickly.
- B. It gives the author's final recommendation.
- C. It supplies a limit to the benefit claimed for the app.
- D. It shows that most passengers do not own smartphones.

Correct: C. The point limits the access benefit. It does not turn an access concern into a population statistic.

Misreading: Reversal, A: the passage accepts the update benefit. **Role swap, B:** the recommendation comes later.

Evidence invention, D: no proportion is supplied.

2 Try it

After a set, count misses by skill rather than by topic. A passage about medicine and a passage about transport can expose the same A4 qualification error.

5 Sources

LNAT Consortium, Test format

42 questions, 12 argumentative passages, three or four questions per passage and a separate essay section. [Read the official format.](#)

LNAT Consortium, Hints and tips

Passage-bound reasoning, close options, no negative marking and deliberate practice. [Read the official advice.](#)

LNAT Consortium, Practice Tests 2010 Commentary

The published commentary behind the reading and reasoning behaviours in the evidence register. [Open the commentary.](#)

The A1 to A6 labels are the platform's study mapping. The LNAT Consortium publishes format and preparation guidance rather than this granular syllabus. The worked passage is original.