# The BarExamMind.com Guide to Passing the California Bar Exam for $500 or Less

## INTRODUCTION

You can pass any bar exam – even the dreaded California bar exam – if you have three things:

- Outlines of the material you need to learn;
- Practice questions; and
- Time to learn the material and take practice tests.

It can be *very* expensive to obtain the first two items on this list.

Some bar preparation courses charge between $3,000 and $4,000!

There are other bar prep courses that cost closer to the $2,000 range, which is a little better, but still very expensive.

If you need to watch your expenses, you can still prepare well for the bar exam.

This guide tells you how to find all the resources you need to pass the California bar exam for $500 or less.

When I took the California bar, I spent $1,395: $1,000 for brand new BarBri books and $395 for access to online MBE prep at Adaptibar.com.

Had I known what is in this guide, I could have done it for much less.

## HOW TO OBTAIN FREE OR INEXPENSIVE OUTLINES

There are lots of ways to get outlines of the California bar subjects. Here are the least expensive:

- Ask friends or acquaintances who recently took the bar if you can have the outlines that they prepared. Chances are, if you attended law school in California, you know someone with outlines from a recent bar exam.
  - Cost: $0

- Get free outlines online. I have posted by old PDF outlines here.
  - Cost: $0

- Buy used bar prep materials from someone. Check on Craigslist and Ebay right after California bar results come out in May and November.
  - Cost: $0-$200

- Buy editable outlines online. This is perhaps the best solution because you get all or almost all of the information you need to pass the bar exam in an editable format which allows you to easily modify the outlines. You can get my newly-updated, editable outlines for only $37.
  - Cost: $37 to $100

## OBTAIN PRACTICE QUESTIONS

All the knowledge in the world is not worth much unless you know how to apply it. Practice is the only way to learn how to apply the law you are learning or ensure that you know how to write a performance test. Below are resources for acquiring free or inexpensive practice questions.

### Practice Essay and PT Questions

- You can get free essay and performance test questions from the California bar website. *If you want to do this, don't delay and go to the site now and download all available samples.* The California bar has been known to delete large groups of questions without notice. Also, be warned that some of these sample answers are very, very well written. This can be a bit intimidating when you first start studying. Don't let it get you down!
  - Cost: $0

- Get a membership to BarEssays.com. This service has gathered graded essays responses from people who have failed the California bar exam. The reason this will help you is that even when people fail the bar exam, they pass some of the essays. With a BarEssays membership, you can see what passes and what doesn't. Very instructive.
  - Cost: $99

- Get/buy essay and PT practice books from former bar examinees.
  - Cost: $0-$200

**MBE Practice Questions**

- Get a copy of the current MBE test information booklet from the National Conference of Bar Examiners. It contains 18 free practice questions. Not much, but they are free. If nothing else, use these 18 as your introduction to MBE question-taking.
  - Cost: $0

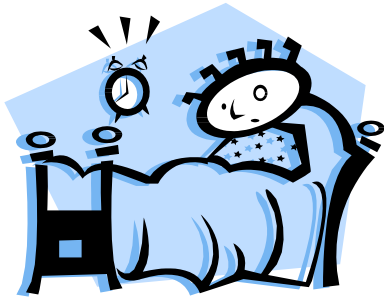
- Buy copies of 200-question practice tests from the National Conference of Bar Examiners.
  - Cost: $50 per test

- Get/buy copies of old practice books from prior bar exam takers. Look on Craigslist and Ebay right after California bar exam results come out in May and November.
  - Cost: $0-$200

- Use an online solution like Adaptibar. I used **Adaptibar** when I took the California bar exam, and I am a huge fan. You can check out my video review by clicking here.
  - Cost: $395 (or only $345 if you buy through my affiliate link. Just make sure you sign up on the enrollment page this link takes you to or you won't get the $50 discount.)

## FINDING THE TIME TO STUDY AND PRACTICE

When you are studying on your own, it can sometimes be difficult to find the motivation to study.



To fight this inertia, you need to prepare a bar exam schedule and follow it (of course, you can modify it as you go along).

The key to creating a schedule is to make sure you cover all the material multiple times and practice, then review, practice then review.

At the end of this guide, I have attached a copy of the schedule I used when I studied for the California bar exam. Feel free to follow it or use it as a model for your own schedule.

If you don't like the sample schedule, then make your own.

If you find it difficult to make your own schedule, see if you can get a copy of a friend's study schedule or hire a tutor for an hour ($75-150/hr) to help design a study schedule to meet your needs.

## CONCLUSION

The bar prep industry gets you to overspend by frightening you into believing that you cannot pass the bar without their expensive programs.

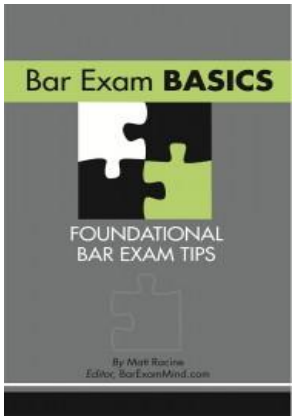
If you believe that, then you should spend the money. After all, you must have confidence in your bar prep materials.

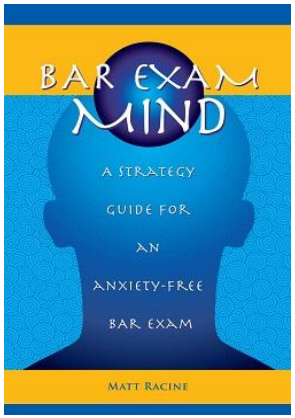
But, if you think you can pass without the expensive extras, then use the menu of options above to put together a bar exam course that will work for you.

Good luck on the bar exam.

And, for more useful bar exam information, be sure to check out my blog and my podcast.

You also might be interested in my two books:



| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
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| January 7<br><br>**Morning**: Read Wills Outline; write summary of Wills outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Torts outline; write summary of Torts outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 8<br>**Morning**: Read Trusts Outline; write summary of Trusts outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Criminal Law outline; write summary of Crim Law outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 9<br><br>**Morning**: Read Community Property Outline; write summary of CP outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Crim Pro outline; write summary of Crim Pro outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 10<br><br>**Morning**: Read Civ Pro Outline; write summary of Civ Pro outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Federal Evidence outline; write summary of Fed Evid outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 11<br><br>**Morning**: Read Property Outline; write summary of Property outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Ethics outline; write summary of Ethics outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website |
| January 14<br><br>**Morning**: Read Contracts Outline; write summary of Contracts outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Remedies outline; write summary of Remedies outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 15<br><br>**Morning**: Read Sales (UCC 2) Outline; write summary of Sales outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Read Cal Evidence outline; incorp Cal Evid *differences* into Fed Evid outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 16<br><br>**Morning and Afternoon**: Read Corporations, Agency and Partnership outlines; write summaries of these outlines and call it "Business Associations" Outline; read at least 1 essay and sample answers from each of the day's topics from the Cal bar website | January 17<br><br>**Morning**: Read through two complete PTs from Cal Bar Website. Quick outline of each; then read sample answers. Note what I missed.<br><br>**Afternoon:** 20 MBE questions from each topic | January 18<br><br>**Morning**: Review 2 of the 6 MBE topics. Make flashcards of concepts that seem difficult and of multi-factor tests/elements; one practice essay for each topic<br><br>**Afternoon:** Select one PT from BarBri book (or Bar website) and write out completely. If from BarBri, make sure answers are available on Bar website – don't rely on answers in BarBri book ; 25 MBE questions for each topic reviewed |

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| January 21<br><br>**Morning**: Review 2 more of 6 MBE topics; flashcards; 1 practice essay each<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review Community Property; flashcards; write 2 essays from Bar website [I needed extra review on CP since I never studied it in law school]; 25 questions each for MBE topics that day | January 22<br><br>**Morning**: Review final 2 MBE subjects; flashcards; 1 practice essay each<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review Remedies and Ethics; flashcards; 1 practice essay each; 25 questions for MBE topics that day | January 23<br><br>**All day:** Review Business Associations: first corporations, then agency, then partnership. Do flashcards and one essay for each before moving on.<br><br>**Extra:** If time, do as many MBE questions in random format; flashcards for only the very difficult questions | January 24<br><br>**Morning**: Review Wills and Trusts outlines; flashcards; 1 essay for each<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review California evidence distinctions; flashcards; since no sample answers yet exist on Bar website, use BarBri essays. Review all MBE flashcards | January 25<br><br>**Morning**: Review Civil Procedure; make flashcards; do 1 sample essay<br><br>**Afternoon:** Do at least 100 randomized MBE questions. Make any necessary flashcards |
| January 28<br><br>**Morning**: Flashcards for all MBE subjects<br><br>**Afternoon:** Do complete PT under timed conditions; review answers on Bar website | January 29<br><br>**Morning**: Flashcards for all non-MBE subjects<br><br>**Afternoon:** Do as many randomized MBE questions as possible | January 30<br><br>**Morning**: Time to assess: what your 5 weakest subjects? Do flashcards for those subjects.<br><br>**Afternoon:** Do 2 essays for each of your weakest subjects: write 1 out completely and outline the other. Fit this in from 1-5pm, even if it seems to fast; feel the pressure. | January 31<br><br>**Morning/Afternoon:** Review essays written yesterday; note weak areas; review in Conviser; once satisfied with review, do as many MBE questions as possible. | February 1<br><br>**Morning**: Quick read through all 6 MBE outlines; (if time do 1 essay for weakest area)<br><br>**Afternoon:** Quick read through all state-specific topics (if time, 1 essay on weakest area) |
| February 4<br><br>**Morning**: Review your weakest MBE subject all morning; | February 5<br><br>FAKE BAR TIME!<br><br>**Morning**: Have a | February 6<br><br>FAKE BAR TIME!<br><br>**Morning**: Do 100 | February 7<br><br>**Morning**: Review MBE. Assess strengths and | February 8<br><br>**Morning**: Do 25 MBEs for 3 weakest |

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| flashcards; essays<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review weakest state-specific topic all afternoon; flashcards; essays; QUIT by 4pm | friend randomly select[1] 3 essays from bar website and do them under timed conditions<br><br>**Afternoon:** Have a friend randomly select a PT from BarBri book or website and do it under timed conditions | randomized MBEs under timed conditions (don't grade until afternoon)<br><br>**Afternoon:** 100 more randomized MBEs under timed conditions. Grade test. | weaknesses. Develop priority of study list<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review essays and PT. What did you miss and why? Issue spotting problem? Lack of knowledge? | subjects<br><br>**Afternoon:** Take the afternoon off! Next week is the big push. |
| February 11<br><br>MEMORIZATION WEEK!<br><br>**Morning**: Memorize Property outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Memorize Torts and Remedies outline; as many Torts and Property MBEs as possible | February 12<br><br>**Morning**: Memorize Crim Law/Pro and Ethics outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Memorize Community Property outline; as many Crim MBEs as possible | February 13<br><br>**Morning**: Memorize Con Law outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Memorize Torts and Remedies outline; as many torts and Con Law MBEs as possible | February 14<br><br>**Morning**: Memorize Contracts/Sales outline<br><br>**Afternoon:** Memorize Civil Procedure and Wills/Trusts outlines; as many Contracts MBEs as possible | February 15<br><br>**Morning/Afternoon**: Memorize Business Associations outline; complete as many random MBEs as possible |
| February 18<br><br>**Morning**: Assess: which 2 MBE topics and 3 state-specific topics are weakest? Outline at least one essay for each topic.<br><br>**Afternoon:** Write out (by hand; preparing for possibility of computer problems) two essays of your choosing; | February 19<br><br>**Morning**: Do as many randomized MBE questions as possible<br><br>**Afternoon:** Review and memorize 3 weakest state-specific areas. | February 20<br><br>**Morning**: Pick 4 topics at random and select essays from bar website; outline essays[2]; review any points you missed or answered incompletely<br><br>**Afternoon:** Flashcard for all 6 MBE subjects; do MBE questions for | February 21<br><br>**Morning**: Review flashcards and outlines for 2 or 3 weakest state-specific topics; outline essays if time or need<br><br>**Afternoon:** Write out a PT by hand (this will suck; but must be prepared for computer failure); go home and | February 22<br><br>**Morning/Afternoon:** Review all 6 MBE subjects (you should know it well enough to pass bar now); review subjects one at a time and do 20 MBE questions for each topic before moving on |

[1] Make sure that the friend knows which essays you have already done so there is no duplication.
[2] If you are still having difficulty getting a good essay form going, then pick 2 topics and write out essays completely.

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| review flashcards for 5 areas identified in the morning | | your 3 weakest areas | ice down hand | |
| First/Only Weekend Studying!!!! → | SATURDAY<br><br>February 23<br><br>**Morning**: Review state-specific issue pairing sheets; flashcards<br><br>**Afternoon:** review outlines of 2 weakest state-specific topics | | SUNDAY<br><br>February 24<br><br>**Morning**: Review issue pairings for MBE topics. As many randomized MBE questions as possible<br><br>**Afternoon:** Flashcards for all topics (pile of cards that are always most difficult to answer) | |
| February 25<br><br>**Morning**: Review issue pairing charts for all topics<br><br>**Afternoon:** Relax, see a movie, check into hotel; sleep | February 26<br><br>BAR EXAM<br>**Morning**: Dominate the essays<br><br>**Afternoon:** Dominate the PT | February 27<br><br>BAR EXAM<br><br>**Morning**: Dominate the MBE<br><br>**Afternoon:** Dominate the MBE | February 28<br><br>BAR EXAM<br><br>**Morning**: Dominate the essays<br><br>**Afternoon:** Dominate the PT;<br><br>Celebrate | February 29<br><br>Celebrate! |