

# **MORE WORDS OF WISDOM FROM LOGISTICS TRAINING SYSTEM STUDENTS**

## **BECOME YOUR OWN TEACHER, YOU WILL BE A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT**

I have been in this industry for almost 7 years. I knew that in order to further my career that obtaining this license was important. I never took it seriously until the third time attempting to pass. I guess I was just naive in thinking that "I do this for a living so how could I not just rely on that to pass this exam." In addition, I was not ready to look at any book after obtaining my MBA, certainly not the CFR! So, the first time I was definitely not dedicated and almost pased. The second time, I was ready to work but was lost on how to organize my time/information and keep to a strict study curriculum. I actually did worse on the second attempt! Needless to say I was frustrated, angry, and feed-up. I knew that I could do this but I just needed guidance on how to get above a 75%. Reading the CFR word for word was not cutting it. It was like that professor you had in school that put 80 power point slides on the screen and read it word-for-word. You do not retain anything and clearly you could not stay interested. In fact, you are wasting your time and better off teaching yourself! But how??

Well, then I realized that I have always been use to the classroom and having structure. I needed this in order to pass. Unfortunately, there was nothing like that in my area and the closest to it was a weeklong intensive that summarized what you should already know by that time the exam was here. I knew I had to set myself up like I was taking an on-line course. This made me a little nervous. I never had an online course and I wondered if I could stay on track without someone forcing me too. I also needed the tools to spin the material in a way that kept me interested. LTS was recommended to me so, without hesitation, I bought the books. I created my own 4 month long study plan. This would allow me to go through the material twice. At first, I dedicated Tues-Wed-Thurs nights and Sat/Sunday mornings at the library. I had to take myself out of the house...too many distractions. Of course, this study curriculum picked up in intensity at the end. Monday was added in and studying all day Saturday or Sunday. I would fall short here and there BUT I always made it up the next day or on the weekend. This was my class and I had to stay disciplined and dedicated. I did not want to do this again, EVER! This was a pass/fail grade with only one shot!

I also took an actual exam every Sunday after I went through the LTS material once starting. This allowed me to understand the structure of the exam, how they asked questions, making sure I was staying within the time frame, and why I was getting questions wrong. Of course, the HTS changed, and some questions were well, questionable. But, I also needed a comfort level with the material AND how to take the exam. Not to mention I did all the chapter questions and previous exam questions in the LTS. The second time I went through the material I would reference the CFR and highlight and review. But, I did not read every regulation word-for-word. I tabbed everything that included important points made in the CFR for ease of reference. I had to know where to go quickly if I was unsure.

Bottom line, LTS gives you the tools that will keep you interested. You have to think like a teacher and apply the dedication required to pass as the student. Do not assume anything, especially that having the workbooks is all you need to pass...it is only hard work, dedication, and understand the material/exam that get you there. LTS provides the material but you need to know how to apply it based on your needs as a student.

Good luck to everyone that is about to take this journey! Special thanks to LTS!!!

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## **If you have English as a second language**

I love to share with people my experienced about my journey to pass the exam.

I want to say there was no short cut and never never never give up.

English is not my mother tone, read those regulations is like read some words put to gather but doesn't not make a sense at all. But I decided I want to be a customer broker, and bite my teeth and do it. This is my 6th attempts!!!!!!!

But I was lucky enough to find you, I mean LTS! Before this I brought DVD from the other program (my first time), I was fail miserable! There was no person answer the phone and the instructor said everything is very easy..... not enough care and updates.

Then I found LTS, all of you are very friendly on the phone and e-mail, the materials is complete and always up today. Especially, you MS Joan you are like Mom to take care us and remind us encourage us, (I specially enjoy all the humors from the materials).

And most of all, you are very kind to me when I failed again and again, and make me feel like it is ok to fail a couple times. I admitted I been study but all the interaction from the school is very essential to me during the preparation of my exam. I own you lifetime gratitude's.

Hope you understand my Chinglish, my next project is to take course for English writing skill.

Hope LTS a prosper future! I will continues endorse the school, One of the Best !!!!!!!

*Note: This student passed on her sixth attempt!*

## **You don't have to be Young or Experienced**

As most "good" students will tell you, how much or how long you study for an exam won't make one bit of difference, if you don't have the RIGHT information to study and the RIGHT presentation of studying it. You don't have to be young. I am a grandmother of 9 grandchildren. You don't have to be working in customs. I had only a few months of customs "experience" when I took the test. All you need are the proper tools.

This is where LTS comes in. The method that is presented both on line and in the text/class books is extremely valuable to being able to retain the information needed to pass the broker exam. But to make it all work, you have to think of it as a partnership. They provide the information necessary, but YOU must provide the time and effort to make it happen. You still have to use your brain and add some of your own skills to put it all together. YOU are the one taking the exam, not them. So prepare yourself.

Work in the books the way they are intended. Don't just go to the exams and then go back and find the answers. READ everything. It definitely helps. Tab the CFR as you are constantly reminded to. Print out the "cheat sheets" these are invaluable. When you see items that look

important (dollar values, dates, times, always are a clue that it will probably be on the exam) tab that also, highlight it, then add a reference to the list of items you want to have handy.

Take the chapter tests after reading each chapter, and then at the end of each week, TAKE THEM ALL AGAIN. You will be amazed at what you have forgotten in a weeks time. When something pops out at you during this, then tab highlight and add to your list of important items. DO NOT think that you will remember everything going into the test. You won't. Tab it, or write it down. (Your local Wal-Mart will wonder why they keep running out of tabs and highlighters!!!)

Take the one week review class just before the exam. This is what I firmly believe, put me over the top. I tried taking the exam without doing this. I failed.

The knowledge that the instructors have is invaluable. They have studied what customs is going to ask. They beat it in your brain as to what you will need to know. They put in the extra time if you need it. That is what makes it work. And you have fun while doing it. The classes are small enough to give the attention you need, while having enough people that you will learn from the questions that others ask also. You will meet people that do customs work for a living, while others that just have decided to learn it new.

Everyone has some ideas that they share on how to study, what to study. You might even make some great contacts!

### **For the exam**

I could go through everything you need here, but guess what??? LTS does that for you, and they keep reminding you what to do, when to do it. What to take. Just follow the instructions given and you will be set. Just make sure you take EVERYTHING with you.

The class notes from the one week class were excellent for having a condensed edition of the major points and categories that the test will be about.

What I can tell you is my experience was: If you think you know the answer, put it down. Don't dwell on it. Chances are you are correct. I was so worried about classifications that I almost didn't complete the test, because I thought the questions were too easy, and kept going over and over them. But, that turned out to not be the case. I actually knew the stuff, and didn't miss

one classification. (A big “THANK YOU” to my instructor for FINALLY making it understandable during those last few days!!!)

Make sure you have a watch with you. Pace yourself. If you get stuck, then go away from it and move on. I found it was better to skip those that I knew I would need to spend time on, and go to another question. Sometimes, you might even find the answer to one of the ones you were struggling with, while looking for something else. Remember you don't have to get a 100% to pass, so make sure you can get to all the questions you DO KNOW.

Bottom line is: just follow the lessons and classes from LTS and you will do great. It really is that simple.

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## **If you think you don't have enough background in this business**

My words are for those that are thinking they don't have enough background to take this exam and pass. I took the exam for the first time in April and passed. My job only requires that I have a theoretical knowledge of importing as my company out-sources this activity. For some reason I decided I needed to take this exam and I am sure glad I did. It has been a journey.

Going into the exam I felt like the underdog. I wasn't working for a freight forwarder and I barely even understood the acronyms they were using. I had to constantly flip back and forth. I started studying for the exam in January. I used a study plan of 2-3 chapters a week. I either came in two hours before work or stayed two hours after to study and studied only one day on the weekend to give myself a break and spend time with my family. It was a real sacrifice for my husband to take on more responsibility with my 3 year old and my life was on hold basically for 3 months.

In February, after I had really started second-guessing my ability to succeed, I found out that after 2 years of trying to get pregnant I finally was! It was great joy! However, I was distracted and then became extremely sick. This severely derailed my studying. I could barely get myself

out of the bathroom much less drag myself to work and then study. I was thinking I wasn't taking this test.....but then again, I don't quit.

After taking a few weeks off, I got back into it. I had to increase the number of chapters because I was behind. I still managed to get the chapter review questions done and the previous test questions done after every chapter. This is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. While doing those questions I made sure not to use my textbook, but the CFR. I then highlighted where I found the answer. This really worked for me. Of course, I tabbed as well...but not until later. Also, when you find out what you had wrong or weren't sure about your answer, look it up from the explanation that the on-line instructor sends and if you still don't understand...ASK! My poor on-line instructor had to argue back and forth with me many times.

Finally, by about mid March, I finally saw my doctor and he gave me a remedy for the morning sickness that included a B-6 vitamin. I honestly think it helped me focus and relax. Usually my own worst enemy is myself. Don't get overstressed about this test. Yes, it is tough, but know you can mitigate that by studying. It seems silly, but I would recommend that folks take Vitamin B before the test. Also, don't drink too much caffeine as it makes you unfocused and jittery.

I finished the last 8 chapters in the week before the class (thankfully they were shorter ones!). Going into the week long class, I had only gone through a handful of classification questions and had never taken a practice exam. Moreover, I didn't even know what a catalog rack was so I didn't know where to purchase one.

I got to the class and felt the least prepared. Most of the students had either taken it before, already worked for a freight forwarder, read each chapter twice, listened to the CD every day, classified till they couldn't think and I was the only one without a catalog rack. Thankfully, someone in the class had a spare and hooked me up with one after class was over and once I knew what it was! A catalog rack was best explained to me as the metal rack that holds an auto part catalog for those of you in the same boat as me.

By the way, it may have made the difference so be sure to get one.

The week long class was invaluable. I was able to leave my job, my husband, my dirty house and my 3 year old and just focus on this test for 5 days right before the exam. Peter was invaluable and I realized I wasn't in as bad a shape as I thought. Moreover, classification was probably my strongest section. To me, it was easy. You get homework every night that really challenges you but I did better on my own than in the group. I needed to find the information on my own. I may be the only one to give this advice, but I would recommend studying alone. You can't take this exam in a group! However, class was so motivating. It was so great to be "in this" with so many smart and talented people. The last day of class you get this 1/2 exam that is so hard it made me think I would never pass the test. I ran out of time and it used every brain cell I had left. Nonetheless, I passed the mini-test and Peter finally divulged that it was the hardest questions he ever found on the exam compiled in one neat little torture test for us.

The exam was the very next Monday. I stayed at the hotel where the test was given and arrived an hour before and found out more than half the test takers beat me! The exam situation was good; I had plenty of room to take the test. I focused on time management and put times next to every 20 questions of where I should be and I stayed on target. Those questions I was unsure of I guessed and moved on while circling them in case I had time to go back. I ended up finishing with 20 minutes to spare and that was invaluable as I was able to go back and look up some questions I was unsure of and that I think made the difference. There was an entire section on Trade Agreements that I couldn't have found answers for if they gave me the entire 4 hours. Don't dwell on these questions. Remember you can get 20 wrong and pass. I guessed on all 7 questions and ended up getting a few of them correct and didn't waste my time on looking up answers that would have been wrong anyway.

Be confident in what you know and don't dwell on what you don't. I left that exam feeling like a million bucks. Regardless whether or not I passed, I thought I did a great job. Moreover, don't talk to anyone on test day. There are a lot of over-achiever type stress cases taking this exam, don't let them ruin your confidence.

I ended up passing the test with a 76.25%. I have never been so proud of a 76% in my life! Good luck to all of you and if I could do it under all of these circumstances, you can too!

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## **Sacrifice & Commit**

Before purchasing the program, I had a long talk with my family regarding the amount of time this would take in preparation and the necessary expenses. Once the decision was made to spend the money, there was no way I was not going to give it my all every day possible.

### **(My Study Schedule)**

Monday thru Friday 5:30 pm-9 pm Library away from kids. Up at 2am to about 6:30am

Brought material to work and studied on lunch break.

Saturdays, 9am-6 pm

Sundays, 2 pm-6 pm

It was about the second week of having the material that I adjusted my schedule to accommodate the material. Every morning, I said my prayers, asked for strength, thanked God for my family, and for giving me purpose. The purpose was to pass and provide a better opportunity for my family. They were my motivation and I put it in God's Hands.

(Irony)

I prayed to pass the exam by at least 6 questions more than required, we did. Upon receipt of my certificate from Logistics Training system, I had passed their course with an 82.5% score. When I received the official notification from Customs, I had passed also with an 82.5% score.

I won't go into detail about how to study as LTS does that. However, if it's in your heart and you've ask for direction, sacrifice the time for a short six months and pursue your dream.

The exam is more work than any curriculum, in any school, but if you want it bad enough, you'll put the work in to pass.

### **(FATIGUE)**

There were points when I had extra time on the weekend or holidays, or whenever, I would study. With that came fatigue and I thought I had forgotten the material that I knew for sure the day before. I had to step back when that happened and take a breather and relax my brain. It was still there. I had to take a day and rest, and everything came back to me.



Once I'd rested, and my brain was ready to receive again, I stayed with my study regimen.

I asked God to take the test for me in case I had one of those forgetful moments.

Good Luck,

Remember: Pray and Study!

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## **Don't Start Too Late**

About mid-January I started studying with the home study program. I pretty much had to cram in order to cover everything for the April Broker's exam. (I would not recommend my way but rather take 6 months or a year to prepare)

Due to the ease and layout of the chapters in the Logistics Training Manual and their references to the Regulations (that are covered on the Broker's Exam) I was able to absorb the needed information and pass the exam on my first try. (Again, I don't recommend starting your studying 2 ½ months before the exam)

The audio cd's and the power point reviews of each chapter are great lead ins and wrap-ups for each chapter. (I would listen to the CD and view the power point before and after reading each chapter)

Even though I passed the exam in April, I still refer to the manual for clarification on issues I have to look up in the regulations for work. I have continued to renew with Logistics Training and plan on continuing to re-new each 6 months. I have also found the system to be valuable for in-house Import Compliance training.

I have already recommended the program to 4 people pre-paring for the exam and will recommend to anyone else who ask. Compared to the price of some of the other programs offered you can't beat Logistics Training Systems.

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## **Studying, taking the test, test day**

I scored 71.25% and needed 75% for the October exam.

Studying for the test / taking the class: First, let me say that I went into taking this class with experience in trucking, a freight forwarder, 3 steamship lines and a transportation company. I did not believe that it would really take the amount of time to study each week that it took. I believed that I had some transferable knowledge from my 15+ year's experience that would help me through the class and the test. But once into the material, and especially during chapters 16-18, it was A BEAR! I began studying in April for the October test; normally I would cover 1-3 chapters a week. Once I didn't look at the material for a week and then went back into it. (By the way, doing this is very bad because it is tough to pick back up!) My life literally consisted of going to work, coming home and studying. Weekends were spent studying. I studied 3 nights during the week and Saturday and Sunday. Driving to work and back home again – yes you guessed it I listened to the CD's. And during Lunch hour, yep, I did more studying. But completing the course work is only the beginning. It is not enough to go through the material and take the quizzes, when you finish the textbook, you need to take the take the previous exams and take them in an "exam" environment. This will show you where you need to go back and review. Remember, it is not how you score on the quizzes, etc because they are not timed. When you are under pressure to find an answer and make a decision, this is how you know if you have the material down pat.

When you take the previous exams, take it with limited space, you may not have much room at the exam site. Adjust to this, I had a rolling cart that I purchased from Office Max that has a snap on lid, you can stack your books on top of this and set it next to you. When I had a little extra room at the exam site, it was a blessing!

OH the best investment I made - nearly forgot to tell you about and all the students and test takers were GREEN with envy. I got a seat cushion, the really nice kind with memory foam in it. This was a huge life saver for the 5 days in class and also for the 4 hour test. Nothing is worse than sitting in an uncomfortable chair for an extended period of time, what a distraction if you are focusing on your bottom end instead of all the good stuff LTS planted into your head! Classification - can't stress this enough, know and understand the rules for Classification. When you are in the test and have these crazy classification questions you can't be thinking "what was that order again on the rules for classifying?" You will lose too much time as it is flipping pages in the HTS to compare 4 digit descriptions, etc.

For test day:

- If possible stay at the hotel where the exam is given or at a hotel close-by to the site. This cuts down on panic setting in the morning of the exam. I struggle sleeping in strange places, so I brought my own pillow and blanket from home, and I brought comfortable clothes for the test.
- Arrive early for the test, get there by 8am. This gives you time to set up your stuff, sharpen pencils, locate the restroom, etc. Don't drink too much before the test, otherwise you'll spend too much time in the restroom.
- Eat breakfast; once the proctor finishes instructions on how to fill in bubbles on your answer sheet and you actually get the test, it is close to 9am. This means that you aren't finished with the test until close to 1pm. Can you hear my stomach growling?
- BREATHE! Don't forget to monitor your time!
- Read the Tips LTS provides on exam day, they are all useful and fabulous! - After you finish the exam, go get a nice lunch and decompress! Roll the windows down and turn up the radio on your favorite song and sing at the top of your lungs because you have just achieved a monumental feat! Give yourself a terrific pat on the back! You deserved it, and remember, if it was EASY everyone would be a licensed broker.

No one, not one person, has taken this test and said "Gosh, I studied WAY too much because that test was SO easy!" Nope, didn't hear one person say this when I left the test. In fact, most people I talked to were ready to go drinking and I don't mean Kool Aid.....

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## **Develop your own style of studying**

Everyone has his or her own style of studying, and I am no different. What helped me the most was staying after hours in my office, moving to the conference room (NOT MY DESK!!!) where I could spread out my materials, and spending an hour or two EVERY NIGHT going over the chapters in the textbook, and highlighting in the HTS and CFR. Also, at least 4-6 hours every weekend was spent in the private study room of my local library. I did find that tabbing the HTS and CFR helped me "learn" the material, but I rarely "depended" on it to find the info while taking the exam. In fact, I used various "quick reference" sheets to remember where the info was that I created during my studies. I had the CD's playing in my vehicle any time my wife wasn't riding with me, so that played a part in retaining the material as well...it should be noted that the info on the CD's helped me better understand the material "overall."

The previous exam questions and chapter review questions were invaluable, as far as I am concerned. In my opinion, they sewed together (in the same format as the exam) the material just covered in the text. Also, the week-long seminar, while boring solely because of the material and not the presenter, was a good review for me, and it happened to be the week before the exam.

A positive attitude is IMPERATIVE to passing the exam, and anyone who constantly thinks about the difficulty of the material is destined for disappointment. A motivational tool worked for me. My motivation was that all of the time I wasn't spending with my wife, child and friends, and all of the work that wasn't getting done on and around my house would be worth it when I didn't have to sit for the exam again. One 4 month sacrifice was all I was allowing myself. In short, stay positive. Yes, it's hard work, and the material is boring...we all know that. But you only have to pass the exam once, like I just did...

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## **Classify, Classify, Classify**

Here are a few of my thoughts - I passed on my first attempt on the Oct. test.

- You MUST pay attention to every single little word on the exam and in the regs. I cannot stress enough how important it is to read slowly and thoroughly. Though during the exam, your brain is telling you to hurry, hurry, hurry, take the extra few seconds to read each question completely and process what you read instead of jumping ahead to find the answer. There is often one little word that makes or breaks the answer.
- Prior to the exam, sit down and take one of the practice tests provided by LTS. Make the conditions as close as possible to the real thing. (time yourself to exactly 4 hours, give yourself a small work area, etc). I truly believe this is great practice, so plan on taking several previous exams this way. It will give you a good indication of where your strengths and weaknesses are. This will also help you plan out your test-taking strategy. Personally, I am weakest with classification. My strategy was to skip right over that section, complete all the other sections and do classification last. That way I did not spend a lot of time on something I struggled with anyway, and did not rush myself through the sections in which I usually scored better.
- Classify, classify, classify. If you are not at least somewhat comfortable with classification, think twice before taking the exam.
- With regard to classification, I cannot stress enough that you need to read all those section and chapter notes when attempting to classify something!!!
- Even if you think you know an answer, do a quick double check just to be sure. You may find that, as you do the double check, you missed a word which completely changes the answer.
- This is an extremely difficult test. However, if you study the LTS materials exactly as directed, I believe you have an excellent chance of passing.

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## **Classify & Tab**

I did pass. The best advice that I could give anyone is to take as many of the actual past exams as possible and stick to the 4 hour time limit. Next would be to know where to find the answer - that is why tabbing is very important!

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## **Short cuts and tricks**

I would suggest trying to find any shortcuts or tricks in remembering where things are found. While taking the time restricted test, any quick findings is a BIG help. I used the plastic post it's for tabbing my books. I tabbed everything as LTS suggested. (I even tried tabbing my kitty...LOL) The paper ones are too flimsy and can rip off. Don't try to get fancy with different colors for different items, this will become too distracting. I used a permanent black fine tip marker to write on my tabs.

The LTS provided cheat sheets are especially a handy tool. Study them, read them and put them in a plastic sheet protector. This way they are easy to find while taking the big test on test day.

I transported my books in a foldable crate purchased from Staples. And when the testing facilities table room was limited, I was able to put my HTSUS on top of this crate creating my own personal extra table. You don't use the HTSUS as often as your other books - so get it out of your way.

Definitely get a hotel room at the hotel or as close to the testing facility as possible - and stay over the night before!!! You don't need to stress yourself out about getting to the site the day of the test. No matter how close you live. I saw this with my own eyes. When CBP tells you the doors close at 8:30AM sharp.....the doors close!! No begging or crying can help you get in. And then when you realize you not only missed the test, but you also are out your \$200.00 testing fee!! :-(

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## **The test is not a joke**

I would say that this test is no JOKE. You work your butt off for three months with no guarantees of passing what so ever. This test is so draining; I still can't pick up a book to start studying for the April exam. If you think you are going to get a new career and make a change by just studying 3 to 6 months, guess again. If you want to be a CPA, engineer, teacher, it takes time to get the knowledge to go into that field. LTS get's you ready, but until you experience the test, you have no idea. There is a 5% pass rate for first timers for a reason. The thing that made me angry was this: The test is so hard to begin with, then the CBP puts in trick questions or re-words them to be the opposite. Pay attention, or you will fall into their trap.

Do NOT take the practice tests until you are totally ready to do so. Do NOT study drawback and then go through all of the past test to see how much you know about drawback. These tests are your only benchmark to see where you are at in your studies. If you can't complete them in four hours, then you are not ready.

If you pay for the on-line instructor, ask them every question you can. If you don't understand, ask. If you go the training class and you don't understand, ask them stay after and explain-they will offer to do this, so take advantage of the offer. I didn't do it and regret it to this day. I'm weak on valuation and still am after taking the test.

Find a person in your area taking the test and team up with them. Having someone familiar in the same room going through the same thing you are is priceless. Study with them prior if possible.

The CFR is a two bladed sword. You start reading when you get it and it puts you to sleep. I tried and couldn't do it. After taking the LTS class and thinking I was ready, I remember wishing I had the one more month just to read the CFR's with the knowledge I gained over the 3 month period. So, take the LTS class, then allow yourself a couple of weeks to go through and re-read the CFR.

Don't freak when you start the test. I struggled with the first question and couldn't even find the answers to questions 5 and 6. If I didn't keep it together, I would have been toast. Keep plugging away and at worst case guess. I guessed on about 20 questions or didn't feel confident with the answers I gave and missed by one question. But, I at least answered all questions.

I would rather miss by 10 than one. Can you not pass by one on the first try and possibly do worse on the second try? Talk about more pressure.

I will say this. I am more determined now to get my license and will definitely try again. Getting this piece of paper is means something to me. If you pass, you have worked hard to earn it.

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## **Do not assume**

*Editors Note: the person who wrote this is in the logistics business.*

I assumed some of the areas I was more familiar with would be easier for me, however I found I struggled the most w/some of those (Classification), and it ate precious time. Next time for me.... I'll not assume, and dedicate equal study time to all areas...

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## **Test Day**

My words of wisdom for future test takers:

Do not socialize with other test takers on test day- I say this for many reasons - fear and anxiety spread like fire. When speaking with others that are anxious you begin to question your beliefs. Be especially careful if you are staying in the hotel where the exam is being held the night before the exam. It will be easy for others staying at the hotel to pick out other exam takers just simply by the books you are tagging along.

Believe in the knowledge you have - if you believe in yourself and are confident in the knowledge then go with it. There is a point where anxiety leads to over studying. I did not think it was possible to over study, but being so anxious about the test made me question the knowledge that was already in my brain and made me spend more time studying topics that I already knew.



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## Study using all of your senses

Here are my words of wisdom:

1. Because I knew absolutely NOTHING about importing, several times, in the beginning, I almost gave up - but, I just kept plugging away.
2. I remembered from studying in the past, that the more senses you use - hearing, seeing, speaking and feeling (writing) - the more reinforcement you get from what you are trying to learn. So I would read a chapter silently, then read it out loud, outline it, read the CFR and outline it - (I finally had to stop outlining the CFR because I was getting behind on my schedule- if I had started earlier, I would have continued this). Then I would listen to the DVD after each chapter, then listen to the MP3 player on the LTS website. After awhile I could say the lines along with the speaker on the DVD. I should have listened more to the DVD in my car traveling to work everyday - that is what I would have done differently - that's how you learn a song is by listening to it over and over.
3. I kept taking the chapter tests and then going over them to figure out why I didn't get the answer correct. I also spent the last week before the test, taking the old tests and going over them as well - yes, it took a lot of time, but it was worth it - I didn't take any time off of work to study - so I studied in the morning before work, during my break at work, at home after work and on the weekends - yes, I was exhausted when it was finally over but I figured it was a one time shot for me - the funny thing was about 3 weeks before the test I decided I wasn't ready and was going to bail - but through encouragement from my family I decided the experience from it would be good - besides, what was another \$200 at this point! ha ha
4. From someone who had no experience in the import field, I found the LTS study materials to be excellent in preparing for the exam - a business acquaintance recommended the LTS group and it was well worth the money.

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## Practice Tests

Here's my "Words of Wisdom"

If I had to do it over again, I would spend more time working through previous exam questions provided in the LT Workbook, and making sure I fully understand the answers to those questions and where corresponding citations can be found. Chapter Review questions provided by LTS are a great way to review what you've just learned, but additional time should be spent in actual application problems.

*Editors Note: What this student is talking about, above, is a special section in the workbook, with actual exam questions listed by subject.*

I prided myself for completely answering a previous exam and carefully checking the answers and learning from mistakes made. However, I should have taken more than one of these previous exams. Obviously, I needed more practice.

I missed passing the October exam by 5 questions.

My words of wisdom:

Take all the practice tests you can. Read all the analysis and comments to the answers provided by Logistics Training Systems. It really helps to have the insight into why the answers are what they are and direction on where Customs wants you to go.

I passed the October Exam.

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## **The test is hard**

To all future test takers, I won't lie to you, it is HARD. But LTS helped me as a first time test taker pass. Any program can give you the basic of what to be ready for, you can even find old questions to base your studies on directly from the CBP, but LTS has a program to train you to find answers quickly and efficiently. This is the KEY TO SUCCESS. Your knowledge and

familiarity with required text allows you to search appropriate sections and confidently answer even the most challenging questions. Again, LTS helped me pass as a first-timer, and I knew the results as I walked out the door.

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## Study Plan

This is my planned process for taking the exam and studying for it for April.

List of likely aids for CBP broker exam: the major goal is to maximize the score within the time allotted--a scarce resource! I hope for 55-60% on the 20 classification questions, and anything greater than 80% on the other questions--this will be a passing 75% overall and recognizes the difficulty of the classification questions! There are booby traps laid here!

### 1. My process:

1. answer by indicating answers on the booklet itself, then transcribe them (when I need a short break) to the scan sheet later.
  2. Quickly look through the 60 questions (non-classification) for those to which I know the answers without looking anything up.
  3. Time: about 20 minutes, 10 questions answered.
  4. At the same time note those which ask for a "time frame" for action. Answer them using the "time frame" cheat sheet.
  5. 5-10 questions: about 5-10 minutes. Total time: 30 minutes, 15-20 questions.
2. Classification questions: 20 questions. Here its important to be efficient with time, since these consume it greedily! My process is to narrow down the most likely answers to focus my attention on a higher probability subset. To "Narrow" I simply look for groupings of answers numerically very close. If I can find the correct answer in one of 2-3 answers rather than the total of five I have saved time. My experience is that it takes about 1 minute for each answer checked. I probably saved 15-20 minutes on the October exam by this means. (Narrowing incorrectly simply means that you have to look at all five possible answers, not any worse than not "narrowing" at all!).
1. As an aside, I hope for 55-60% here, they seem to be the trickiest!

2. Time for 20 classification questions: 75-80 minutes rather than 100 minutes which I normally take.
  3. Total time so far: 110 minutes for 40 questions, including the ugly classification questions. This leaves 130 minutes for the rest of the exam and going over uncertain answers.
  3. Forms questions: Use the list of CBP forms in the Workbook appendix. Usually just the description there is sufficient!
  4. Have tabbed:
    - a. the list of Ports of Entry and Service Ports (CFR 101.3)
    - b. International Standard Codes (Workbook, CATAIR, appendix B)
    - c. Constructing the Manufacturer Identification Code (Directive 3550-055, workbook p. 7)
  5. Have a photocopy of the cross reference index (Textbook, index) to save time in locating a point of interest. This is instead of having to use the workbook itself, which takes time.
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## **Read, Test, Reread, Test Again**

My words of wisdom: You must be committed in your studying. I worked a 40- hr sometimes plus work week, and actually put in anywhere from 22 to 30 hours of studying (the workbook, reading the CFR, and the quizzes) for almost 2 months solid.

You can figure that each chapter will take a minimum of 4 hours of reading (which includes the workbook and then the CFR). When you get up to Chapter 15, it will take much more!

Classifications took about 12-15 hours to get through.

Therefore, you must set time aside each day and part of your weekend in studying and doing the quizzes. What worked for me, since I did pass the Oct exam (and on my first try, I would like to say!) is to be consistent by first reading the textbook, then reading the appropriate CFR portion. After you take the chapter quiz, do the previous test questions in the workbook. Then go to the quiz site in the computer and take the chapter test, again. Once you receive your "WRONG" responses back, go to the CFR where the correct answer is and re- read it. Then, you can move on to the next chapter.

It worked for me! Now what I find very surprising is that it will take 8 to 12 months to complete the background check before I get my license!

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## **What you HAVE to do to pass**

1. Follow the program as directed by the instructor. Do all homework. Be prepared for class, The method works but you have to follow it as instructed.
  2. Memorize the easy stuff-so you don't have to look all questions. There is no time. Make sure you know all calculations and understand the why behind every step to get the results.
  3. Memorize the indexes- where to look for Chapters- I tabbed the indexes in the CFR on the top of the page for easy identification. All other tabs were done on the side of the CFR. I also ripped the first pages before the Index of the CFRs to get to them faster; therefore the index was the first page by default in all my CFR books. Every second counts.
  4. Make your own tabbing: Only tab the most important sections: as instructed by course and TAB the CATAIR. You want to be able to see the tabs for easy identification. TAB different sections with different colors. If you tab yourself you will memorize where are things located anyway. TAB the LTS book as well, I was able to answer many questions from that book.
  5. Don't panic. When I saw there were many questions from Part 200 of CFR (I did not read) I kept my calm and looked for the answers. (The fact that I memorized what the instructor advised on all other sections saved my life because I had the time to look for the answers).
  6. Get together and form study groups. Try to have people that took the exam before because they will also guide you and provide valuable input based on their experience. Rules of engagement for study groups: be prepared before the study group meeting, do not waste other peoples time if you did not study the material and tried to understand before the meeting. Study groups are for the purpose of clarifying the material already studied.
  7. Put the time into it. Study every day Monday-Sunday. Take a breather from time to time but do not procrastinate. It is the only way, there are no shortcuts to this.
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## Whatever it takes to pass

I am not a newbie. I have plenty of experience in the industry. I studied for six months before the April 2012 exam. I was one of the 1350+ people who did not pass – **only 12 passed that exam.** I did pretty well for such a tough exam, but I wasn't close enough to passing to make a protest feasible. Knowing that I would likely have passed, if not for such a badly written exam, I became extremely determined to pass the October 2012 exam.

And pass I did! LTS' opinion on answers for the October exam show I have an unofficial score with enough cushion to still pass, even if the official answers adjust my score a bit downward.

How did I do it? I simply did whatever it took. I only took off three weeks from studying after the April exam before I began studying again. I started the LTS textbook again from the beginning. You have to read it. There's no way around it. Think of it this way – it's easier to deal with the textbook first, then the 19CFR. The textbook is in plain English. The CFR, not so much!

I had no social life for six more months, no summer fun in the sun, no vacation! Any commitments outside work were put on hold. Some people had difficulty understanding this kind of commitment, but that was their problem, not mine. Summer is very busy at work, with lots of extra hours, but I still fit in a lot of studying. The online Power Point chapter review lessons were good for review on my lunch hour. Everything else got pushed to the side, and I do mean everything. I did nothing but work and study. For six months. But I passed. That's the goal, is it not? Multiple people commented how impressed they were with my dedication and focus. It's six months, not forever. This process is all about delayed gratification.

Beginning in July, I began to take a timed practice exam each Sunday for six weeks, scoring no lower than 80%. After several, I figured out what wasn't working for me with how I had organized my reference materials. I was fumbling with too many books. I got a 12" catalog rack (I'd used a 6" rack for just the tariff for April's exam). I retabbed everything with better tabs once I got the 2012 19CFR (aka "the regs") and tariff. I just didn't tab the regs sections. I added extra tabs in places like part 10 (TIB, free trade agreements, etc.). I even had extra tabs on the top of the page – the J-List, A1A entry docs list, and additional invoice requirements. I got the loose leaf regs this time. I'd used the two spiral bound regs volumes for April. Too much fumbling means wasted time on exam day. It was a tight fit, but I was able to fit my textbook in the rack

between the regs and tariff. That turned out to be the perfect place for the textbook since I referred to it often on exam day. I had a separate binder of references (“fast facts” sheets from LTS, a few CBP directives, and various helpful bits I’d picked up all the way), as well as the LTS references book (CBP forms, CATAIR, etc.).

Taking practice exams showed I was able to find information much easier and much quicker. Right before the October exam, I added a big binder of previous exams, separated into the different sections (entry, broker compliance, etc.), and tabbed. It was a reference of last resort if I was really stuck. I can't remember if I actually used it or not!

The turning point came Labor Day weekend, when I retook the April exam. I scored in the low 80s. The extra studying and reorganized reference materials made all the difference. That was my last timed practice exam, but that was all I needed. I spent the rest of September going through previous exams, making sure I could find the information in my references. I spent a lot of time reading parts 111, 141, 142 and 171 of the CFR and doing classification. I read the free trade agreements and the section/chapter notes in the tariff, with lots of notes and highlighting. I even made notes when necessary, in the body of the tariff itself.

I took several days off work before the exam. If you can manage this, do it. I was able to relax some, catch up on sleep, and do a lot of review. I needed the time between work and the exam. I can't imagine working right up until the exam. All the constant review put my brain on overload. Two evenings before the exam, I simply couldn't study any longer. I packed up everything for the exam, slept well, and two days later, aced the exam.

If I hadn't been willing to put my life on hold for another six months, I'd never have passed. Now, it's just a matter of waiting for my official notification of passing. My license application is already filled out!

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## **How to Study for the Exam**

I am by no means an expert, but after working in this industry for 12 years I was able to successfully pass the CBP Broker's Exam on my first try. I am convinced the LTS study program was a major reason why I passed. To anyone who is just starting to or thinking of starting to study for the exam, I would say...

#### 1. Do's and Don'ts:

- Do begin preparing as soon as possible. Start studying ASAP.
- Do prepare a study schedule and include a day to unwind here or there.
- Do review all study material provided. Every bit of guidance is provided for a reason... use it.
- Don't attempt to take this test alone, without a strong test prep course, such as LTS.
- Don't underestimate the importance of reading CFR 19 as instructed by course, even the chapters that seem boring. CBP may test on anything at any given time.
- Don't try to cram too much, as test day nears. This will likely add to stress and anxiety during this process.

#### 2. For a study schedule, the following worked for me:

- For every LTS lesson:
  - Read CFR 19 chapters directly from CFR.
  - Read LTS lessons for those CFR chapters just read. Do all LTS chapter review questions.
- This will take:
  - 10-15 hours a week for 8 weeks, to read CFR and study LTS lessons.
  - 10-15 hours to take practice exams and do HTS questions, 2 weeks prior to exam.
  - 10-15 hours to review material, listen to audio CD's, and review quick reference sheets the week prior to the exam.

#### 3. As I studied, I used the following highlight codes in CFR 19 and LTS textbook:

- Green highlight: CBP forms
- Blue highlight: monetary penalty amounts
- Yellow highlight: information that stood out from the material



- Orange highlight: dates and timeframes
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## **The Cheat Sheets are IMPORTANT!**

I seriously want to thank ALL of you. This course was so beneficial. I am one of those people who has always considered herself “not a good test taker”. With this being my first time, I was pretty much prepping myself to fail, but something about the flow of the materials really did help me. If I can give anyone who takes this course a couple words of wisdom I would say, make sure to take ALL the cheat sheets that LTS provides into the test with you. There were multiple classification questions just on the textiles and CBP did not make those easy. I know the information is in the chapter notes, but when you’re in a pinch it was so nice to just be able to turn to the cheat sheets and see (in English) what stitch count an article must have to be classified as a sweater for example.

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## **Every question is important**

EVERY QUESTION IS IMPORTANT and can make or break whether one passes or fails. If you find yourself with 10 minutes left in the exam and you have 3-4 questions unanswered...Take your time, relax, and carefully answer them. Chances are if you rush and guess on them you will get them wrong, but if you worked out at least 2 within the 10 minutes remaining you will have a higher probability of answering at least two of the questions correct. I wish I followed my own advice since I scored a 73.75% and was in the above mentioned circumstance.