

LOGIC GAMES

DECONSTRUCTED

Let's take a 1-2-3 macro-look at how LSAT Logic Games are designed.

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1. Assignment + Ordering, Grouping, or Both

All LSAT games are about **assigning** elements to positions. For about two-thirds of all games, the positions are **ordered**. For about half of all games, the positions are **grouped**. Some games involve both ordering and grouping; it's extremely unusual for a game to involve neither.

Assignment + Ordering

Six friends—Fred, Gia, Han, Ingrid, Jen, and Ken—each take turns hitting a pinata. They each hit it once, one at a time and in order...

Assignment + Grouping

Six friends—Fred, Gia, Han, Ingrid, Jen, and Ken—are split into two teams—team A, and team B...

Assignment + Both

Six friends—Fred, Gia, Han, Ingrid, Jen, and Ken—are paired up to play three games of chess. The chess games will take place one at a time and in order...

2. Design Issues: Subsets and Mismatches

Certain games are further complicated because of subsets or numerical mismatches. Either the elements, the positions, or both may be broken down into subsets. Numerical mismatches occur when the number of elements doesn't equal the number of positions, or when the number of elements or positions is unknown.

Subset Examples

Six students—Fred, Gia, Han, Ingrid, Jen, and Ken—are trying out for a role in the school play. Some of the students are seniors, and some are juniors...

Mismatch Examples

Sara received eight different phone messages from three different people—Marc, Nancy, and Opal...

Eight people—R, S, T, U, V, W, X, and Y—will be assigned to four different teams. Each team will have a captain, and an assistant...

Eight people—R, S, T, U, V, W, X, and Y—are vying for the five starting positions on a basketball team...

3. Rules Issues: Conditionals and Ors

Finally, certain games are complicated by conditional rules and or rules. When games have multiple conditional rules, seeing how those rules come together, and how they don't, will be the key to answering questions. When games have complex or rules, they commonly warrant setting up multiple diagrams.

Examples of Conditional Rules

If Jeff goes third, Mary will go fifth.

Examples of Or Rules

Either Sara or Wilma, but not both, will be selected.

Tom won't get selected unless Stacy does.

Nick went before Grace or Jan, but not both.

breakdown of games from "10 New, Actual Official LSAT Prep Tests"

Here is a chart of how the games from exams 52-61 compare with the issues that we've discussed. Note that this represents about 3 1/2 years worth of published LSATs.

Exams	52				53				54				55				56				57				58				59				60				61				t
Game	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	40
Ordering	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	27			
Grouping		•				•			•	•	•				•			•	•	•			•	•	•									•	•		16				
Subset			•				•			•			•			•			•			•			•									•	•		13				
Mismatch					•							•				•						•					•							•	•	•	11				
Significant Cond		•													•																					•	9				
Significant Or			•			•						•																								•	4				

Final Study Tips

When you first start preparing for the LSAT, it can seem that there are an infinite variety of issues that can appear in Logic Games. Hopefully, the information above helps you see that the various types of Logic Games are constructed by bringing together different combinations of just a few basic characteristics.

Many students prepare for the Games section by studying different "game types," or combinations of the above characteristics. They develop unique ways to handle these individual game types—for example, they develop one system for diagramming subsets in ordering games, and another for diagramming subsets when they appear in grouping games. By test day, they invariably feel more comfortable with certain game types than others, and they go into the exam hoping to get the types of games that they feel comfortable with.

Instead of trying to master the various combinations of characteristics that define different "game types," work to master the above-mentioned fundamental components of all games. By thinking of all games in terms of these basic ingredients, you can ensure consistency and growth during your study process. And, if you can gain mastery over these seven issues (assignment, ordering, grouping, subsets, mismatches, conditional rules, and or rules), you can go into the exam confident that nothing in the games section will surprise you.

If you'd like to review how to diagram these various issues, please see Diagramming Logic Games.