



# **BCBA EXAM STRATEGIES & STUDY PLAN**



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# TESTING STRATEGIES

## *DO NOT LEAVE A QUESTION BLANK*

Our number one piece of advice is DO NOT LEAVE A QUESTION BLANK. When a question is left blank it is automatically marked incorrect. Even if you completely guess the answer, you have a 25% chance of getting it correct.

## *BE MINDFUL OF YOUR PACE*

The exam consists of 160 multiple-choice questions, and you have 4 hours to finish it. This breaks down to about 90 seconds per question- keep an eye on your pacing.

Take a short break if you start to lose concentration, but keep in mind that breaks do count against your total testing time.

## *CATAGORIZE YOUR ANSWERS*

Take the test all the way through the first time and mark down whether you want to go back and review that question or not.

When you answer a question that you want to review again later you can mark it on the computer screen, but we feel that it may be useful to classify them on your scratch paper as well so that you can review all the ones you are unsure of first (c below), then you can review the ones you were fairly confident in (b below), finally you can review the ones you had no idea on as time permits.

You want to review them in the order above so that you have the highest likelihood of the most correct answers.

- a) Certain that it is correct
- b) Feel good about it, but may want to review later
- c) Unsure, definitely want to review later
- d) Have no idea of the correct answer

# Study Plan Basics

Use the following guide to create a study plan to help you stay on track to acing the BCBA exam

## *When making your study plan, keep these things in mind:*

- How are you going to hold yourself accountable?
- Do you have any reinforcers for yourself built in? Dig deep into your self-management knowledge here! The more detailed you can be the better your outcome will be.
- When are you going to communicate with your supervisor and let them know how much you got accomplished, your scores on mock exams, etc.?

## *Create a Time-Based Action Plan*

Create your plan based on the number of weeks you have allotted study.

Include goals or benchmarks to hit each week.

Focus on your weakest areas from your performance on the mock exam.

Depending on the time you have, retake mock exams every 3 to 4 weeks to see your progress

## *Start With Baseline*

- Take a timed full-length BCBA Mock Exam to get your baseline data.
- Ensure you practice under conditions like the actual testing environment (i.e., timed test on the computer, environment free of distractions, writing down questions you want to review later, etc.).
- Practice the pacing of the exam. You will want to finish 40 to 50 questions per hour to finish within 4 hours while having a bit of time for review of your answers at the end.

## *Think Aloud*

Consider using the Think Aloud Strategy when reviewing test questions. The think aloud strategy involves the articulation of thinking, and has been identified as an effective instructional tool.

## *Test Anxiety*

Consider learning some mindfulness exercises that may help with test anxiety.

*Please note that this exam advice is based on the opinions of BlueSprig. Remember, there is no single "right way" to prepare for the exam and finding a strategy that works for you is most important.*



# STUDY PLAN CHECKLIST

Use the guide below to create your own individualized study plan. There are many, many different examples of a study plan and different ways to accomplish this goal- this is only ONE example, feel free to use your own, however we feel that the weekly structure and the inclusion of at least 2 mock exams, one as a baseline.

## BASELINE MOCK EXAM

☐

Date:

Score:

Lowest Scoring Sections:

*If the data are available, also record your rate of correct responding and incorrect responding; this could be useful data to track as you prepare for the exam.*

## ACCOUNTABILITY

☐

How will I keep myself accountable to the study plan I design for myself?

## REINFORCERS

☐

How will I reinforce adherence to the study plan?

*Must Have!*

## MOCK EXAM #2+

☐

Date:

Score:

Lowest Scoring Sections:

*If the data are available, also record your rate of correct responding and incorrect responding; this could be useful data to track as you prepare for the exam.*

# STUDY PLAN

If you do not have enough time to complete all the weeks that are in the example, condense it into the amount of time you have if possible. If you have more time, expand the weeks and add more content!

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

# STUDY PLAN

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

Focus areas this week:

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

Focus areas this week:

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<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

Focus areas this week:

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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\_\_\_ WEEKS TO GO!

Focus areas this week:

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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# WEEKLY PLANNER

FOCUS FOR THE WEEK:

SUNDAY

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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NOTES

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# STUDY HABIT TRACKER

MO TU WE TH FR SA SU

BEHAVIOR:

MONTH OF:

REINFORCERS:

NOTES:

MO TU WE TH FR SA SU

BEHAVIOR:

MONTH OF:

REINFORCERS:

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REINFORCERS:

NOTES:



# EXAMPLE STUDY PLAN

## 8 WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week: Establish baseline*

- ☐ Review the test strategies and decide which to employ
- ☐ Complete Baseline mock exam

## 7 WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week: Lowest scoring task list area from mock exam*

- ☐ Crosswalk lowest scoring section to the content of the Cooper book- read content and complete quizzes in chapters to 100% accuracy.
- ☐ Practice SAFMEDS or flashcards from this task list every day. Make additional cards as needed.
- ☐ Download a study app and complete quizzes corresponding to this task list area until mastery. Consider adding some timed quizzes if possible.
- ☐ Meet with supervisor or study group and go over incorrect answers from Mock Exam and any quizzes, or any concepts you are struggling with. Consider using the Think Aloud Strategy when reviewing test questions.

## 6 WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week: 2nd lowest scoring task list area from mock exam*

- ☐ Complete the Cooper chapters corresponding to your next lowest scoring area and complete quizzes in chapters to 100% accuracy.
- ☐ Practice SAFMEDS or flashcards from this task list area every day. Make additional cards as needed.
- ☐ Use study app and complete quizzes corresponding to this task list area until mastery.
- ☐ Meet with supervisor or study group and go over incorrect answers from any quizzes or any concepts you are struggling with.

## 5 WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week: 2nd lowest scoring task list area from mock exam*

- ☐ Complete the Cooper chapters corresponding to your next lowest scoring area and complete quizzes in chapters to 100% accuracy.
- ☐ Practice SAFMEDS or flashcards from this task list area every day. Make additional cards as needed.
- ☐ Use study app and complete quizzes corresponding to this task list area until mastery.
- ☐ Meet with supervisor or study group and go over incorrect answers from any quizzes or any concepts you are struggling with.

# EXAMPLE STUDY PLAN

## 4 WEEKS TO GO!

*Focus areas this week: Lowest scoring task list area from mock exam*

- ☐ Practice SAFMEDS or flashcards from last 3 weeks.
- ☐ Use study app and complete quizzes corresponding to the lowest scoring 3 task list areas.
- ☐ Complete 2nd Mock Exam
- ☐ Analyze the data!

## 3 TO 1 WEEKS TO GO!

- ☐ Continue to hone your plan from here, making adjustments where needed.
- ☐ Consider learning some mindfulness exercises that may help with test anxiety.

### *Day of the Exam*

Eat something.

No more studying- you know what you know at this point- and you know it!

Get to the testing center early and check in.

Show that exam who's boss!

## ANALYZE THE DATA!

- How does your performance compare to baseline?
- Are you answering more question correct per minute? Fewer answers incorrect per minute?
- Has your study plan been effective so far at increasing your performance on your 3 lowest areas?
- If you have not increased your scores significantly in these three areas, it's time to readjust your study plan with more time, different resources, etc. Your data are showing you that your intervention needs tweaking!
- If your score overall has increased and scores in the lowest 3 areas have increased, then your study plan intervention appears to be working! Repeat this plan within the following weeks.



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*"The secret of  
getting ahead  
is getting  
started."*

- MARK TWAIN

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# HELPFUL RESOURCES



## BACB

*Website url: [Click Here](#)*

Visit the BACB website for all information related to application, test date, ethics code, newsletters, and more.

## SAFMEDS

*Website url: [Click Here](#)*

A host of studies demonstrate the superiority of SAFMEDS over flashcards and other self-study practices. Research indicates that SAFMEDS form an effective instructional and assessment method in many domains.



## THINK ALOUD STRATEGY

*Website url: [Click Here](#)*

The think aloud strategy involves the articulation of thinking, and has been identified as an effective instructional tool.

## MINDFULNESS FOR TEST ANXIETY

*Website url: [Click Here](#)*

Simple mindfulness techniques can help with anxiety of all kinds, including test anxiety.





**JOIN THE BLUESPRIG TEAM**



## **ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CAREER?**

At BlueSprig, we are on a mission to change the world for children with autism. And at the core of this mission is our BlueSprig team.

Our talented and passionate employees are a critical piece of the puzzle who deliver high-quality ABA therapy driven by our commitment to exceeding industry standards of clinical outcomes.

**LEARN MORE**

